HUMBLEWOOD®

Beyond the Canopy

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Credits

Writing and Game Design: Sharang Biswas, TK Johnson, Jennifer Kretchmer, Kat Kruger, Verity Lane, Serena Langton, Luis Medina, Chris Pinch, Jordan Richer

Editors: Andrea Bruce, Matt Click, Scott Fitzgerald Gray, Verity Lane, Jordan Richer

Special Thanks: Ryan Burns, Amelia Duri, Cortni Fernandez, Victoria Jeffery, Allie McAllister, Matei Monoranu, Ceara O'Malley, Cristina Pirvu, TR Rowe, Mike Wong, Sebastian Yūe, Michael Rusakov, Command Creative Studios: (Robert Altschuler; Tommy Pedrini; Chiyoko Yamasato; Jason Zaffary), Tableflip Foundry, The Crafty Gamer, Yaniir, Elderwood Academy

Graphic Designers: Ricardo Evangelho, Madison Pflance

Producer: Ricardo Evangelho

Project Managers: Torin Assal, Ricardo Evangelho, Chris Mahon

Content Leads: Verity Lane, Jordan Richer

Art Directors: Brian Scott Walters

Cover Illustrator: Steve Prescott

Interior Illustrators: Christina Bindon, Amanda Brack, Josiah "Jo" Cameron, Vadim Ciocazan, Emily Fiegenshush, Liam Gregg, Chuck Grieb, Lauren Henderson, David Hoffrichter, Rowan Holloway, Risa Hulett, Sam Key, Emory Kjelsberg, Christina Kraus, Brendan Lancaster, Annelise Mak, Julia Metzger, Aaron Miller, Scott Murphy, Irina Nordsol, Riccardo Piova, Cristina Pirvu, Marzena Piwowar, Hugo Solis, Alyse Stewart, Vinod Rams, Olivia Rea, Alannah Rose, Chris Seaman, Nine Simpson, Andrea Sipl, Alyse Stewart, Celia Tang, Mariah Tekulve, Tiffany Turrill, Nataly Zhuk

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Lauren Henderson

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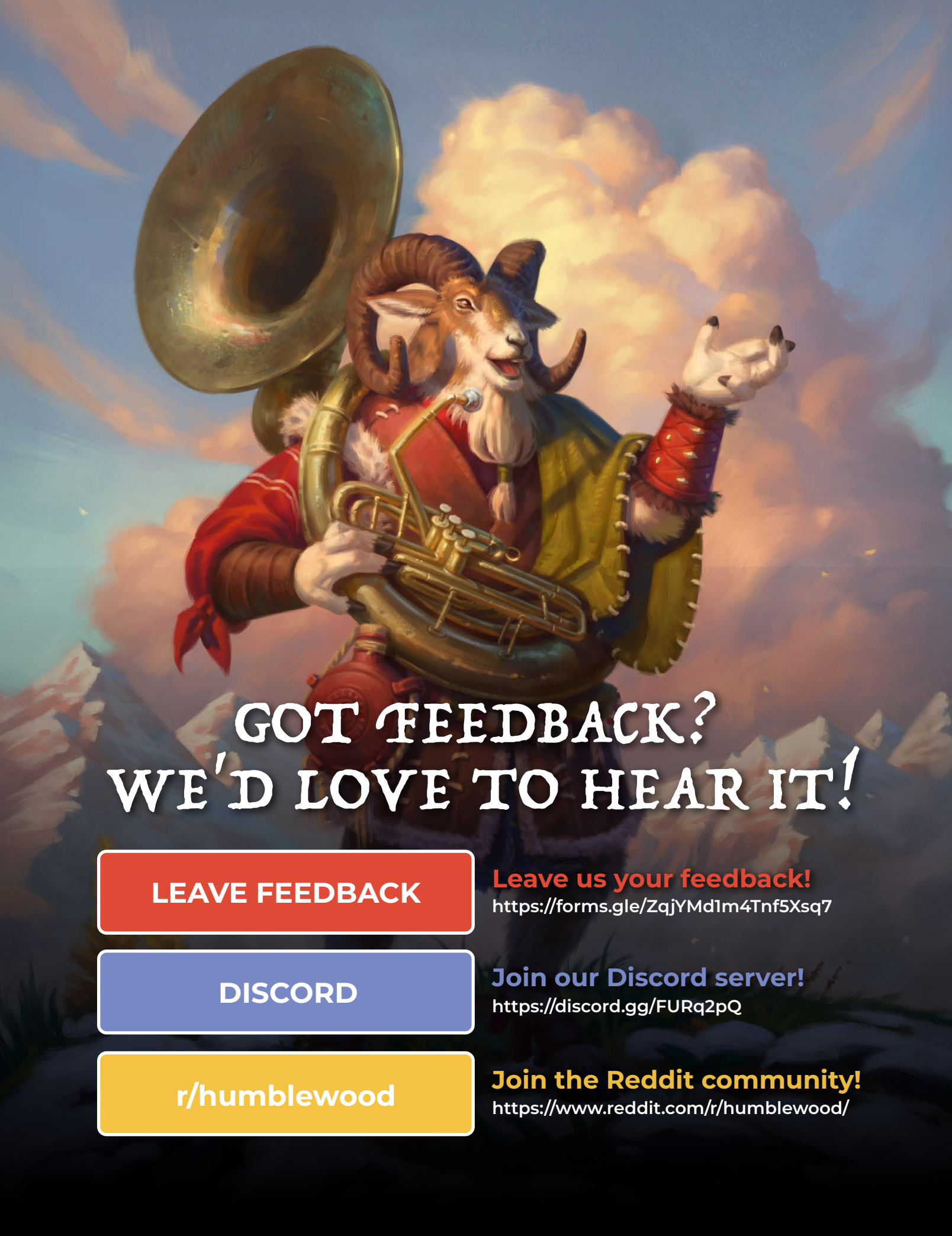

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Chapter 3

3 Exploring Wesden

The World of Everden

Everden is a world of magic springing from nature. The people dwelling here resemble animals and birds, each with their own natural skills and talents. The land, skies, seas, and lives of Everden's folk are all touched by fundamental guiding forces that give the world its unique character.

The Great Rhythm. The inhabitants of Everden refer to the force that shapes, guides, and connects their world as the Great Rhythm. Like a musical score, the Great Rhythm ensures the notes of creation are played in the proper order—the seasons change, the sun rises and sets, death follows life, and new life springs from death. The conductors of the Great Rhythm are the Amaranthines, deities honored across Everden (see **Religion in Wesden** for more information).

Evertrees. Towering over Everden are the monumental life-forms known as the Evertrees. No two Evertrees look alike, as each grows to suit its local conditions. These massive plants tower over even the largest mundane trees, but it is not just their size that makes them special. Evertrees are sentient, with thoughts and feelings of their own, though they experience existence on a slower timescale than the fast-paced folk who live in and around them. They are also deeply magical. Their roots connect directly to the Great Rhythm, and they act as anchors for Everden, bringing magic and vitality into the world and ensuring the balance of nature is maintained.

There are two Evertrees on the continent of Wesden: Alderheart and Atloh. Alderheart, the Great Tree City, grows in Humblewood. This Evertree is intricately connected with the folk living within its branches, trunk, and roots. Alderheart is loved as a home and sanctuary. The second Evertree, Atloh, grows in the southern Tanglewilds. Here, folk revere the tree as a sacred site, and only the regent and high priestess of the sun, called the faa'seng, is allowed to live in its branches. Still, Atloh provides for its local community in its own way. Resembling an enormous banyan tree, its aerial roots and extensive vines stretch far beyond the reach of its branches and form the streets of the city of Halara.

Elemental Energy. Fire, water, air, earth, and all their myriad combinations dance to the tune of the Great Rhythm. These natural forces are potent but have not gone unchanged in Everden. While elementals are found elsewhere in Everden, taking on the forms of great animals made from elemental forces, they are vanishingly rare on the continent of Wesden. Here, few have ever seen a true elemental as they were driven to near extinction by a group of arcane-scientists called Fizzars, who trapped them in batteries to power their machines around 2,000 years ago. This had unintended consequences. First, the physical forms of the elementals left behind after their energy was absorbed continue to roam the land as angry undead called hollowings. Second, rocks that once sang with trained arma hedge stonesingers fell silent at losing their elemental kin as the land itself grieved.

Eventually, the vibrant elemental energy of Everden found new outlets in other creatures. Many beasts became elementally touched, sprouting signs of their growing connection with fire, water, air, or earth. Today, creatures such as the air-touched windwatchers, the earth-touched dire mountain lions, the ice-touched maulruses, and the adaptable orephidians that can take on many elemental forms, fulfill the roles that elementals once did in maintaining the balance of nature. Elementals have been missing from Wesden for so long that many folk have forgotten they ever existed.

The Elemental Aspects. The most powerful elementals in Everden are called the Aspects. These primordial beings are the purest expression of elemental energy, ferocity, and power. They remain mysterious. The emergence of the Aspect of Fire in Humblewood has caused more than one great calamity (see the ***Humblewood Campaign Setting***). The Aspect of Water has not been sighted in generations. Rumors swirl that the Aspect of Air resides in the storm-wracked Gasparian Isles far to the east of Wesden, while not even rumors have surfaced about the Aspect of Earth's whereabouts.

In their natural state, the Aspects are part of the cycle of the world. Though they can be highly destructive, heralding forest fires, floods, hurricanes, and other natural disasters, these are also part of the Great Rhythm. The Aspects clear the way for change and renewal.

The History of the Fizzars in Wesden

The world of Everden is vast and varied, with diverse continents separated by wide seas. This book focuses on the western continent of Wesden, which stretches from the northern Crystal Expanse, through the lush Firnveldt grasslands and great forest of Humblewood, across the blasted peaks of Stormcrag, and south to the thriving jungles of the Tanglewilds. Life in Wesden has flourished and receded following the Great Rhythm since the creation of the world.

Rise of the Fizzars. One of the first great upsets to the Great Rhythm in Wesden began around 2,000 years ago. The group of artificers who called themselves the Fizzars first arose as a prominent faction in the Tanglewilds. Beginning as a sect of clerics attempting to better honor the Amaranthines by better understanding Everden, the Fizzars soon learned that by understanding the world, they could also shape it. To the Fizzars, poetry and engineering were one and the same. Even as they left their clerical roots, their science was a mystical and artistic means of honoring the Amaranthines, particularly Gesme, the Amaranthine of innovation. As their art, wealth, and influence grew, folk from across Wesden soon started training to become Fizzars. The Fizzar philosophy of controlling nature by extracting its power rather than building alongside it spread across the continent. While this led to an age of impressive technological and arcane advancements that lasted 400 years, the Fizzars' pride and disregard for nature inevitably led to their downfall.

Destructive Choices. In their quest for what they called "the perfect now," a theoretical state of sublime beauty—the Fizzars began to ignore the ethical and environmental consequences of their obsession with progress. While some Fizzars were content to use chemical, mechanical, and biological energy in their works, many sought out elementals and drained them of their power. Although this sparked an industrial revolution across all of Wesden, it greatly disturbed the balance of nature. Magical weather phenomena called "sickly skies" began to occur frequently across Wesden. These ranged from the strange and surreal—winds that only children and the elderly could feel—to the outright devastating—rain that slowly transformed whatever it touched into salt. In response, the Fizzars built arcane shields to contain the power of these arcane storms. Though the network of shields provided relief across the continent, they required massive amounts of energy, which the Fizzars sourced from elementals. The remains of the drained elementals began to revolt. These hollowings were made of pain, rage, and hate; all that was left of elementals after their vital energy was absorbed. Yet, the Fizzars ignored the harm they were doing.

Klaythusar's Ambition. In the Tanglewilds, a moon eluran named Klaythusar was born into this height of Fizzar power and arrogance. He studied under the greatest scholars of the age, learning how to trap, drain, and use elementals. However, Klaythusar believed he could surpass all the Fizzars who had come before him by harnessing the power of one of the Aspects. With such power, he believed he could not only end the sickly skies, but also reshape the world to his liking. Klaythusar set his sights on the Aspect of Water, believing that it was the gentlest of them and thus would be the easiest to capture and drain. He headed to the far north of Wesden and built his great Temple of Rime and Reason. There he and his tilia apprentice Natu constructed an enormous machine intended to absorb the Aspect of Water, which roamed the seas nearby.

The Shattering. Although all of Klaythusar's calculations and preparations were immaculate, he had not accounted for the sheer power of the Aspect of Water. When he activated the process to absorb the Aspect, using his mind and body to control the transfer of power, the Aspect resisted. As its energy poured through Klaythusar and into the battery he had prepared, it transformed from liquid into its enraged, icy form. This unleashed a shockwave of cold so powerful that it shattered northern Wesden into an archipelago and froze it over. Klaythusar was entombed in ice, and Natu was transformed into the first frostburned, a frigid undead creature. Despite his world-shaking failure, Klaythusar's experiment worked—in a way. He has successfully sealed the Aspect of Water inside an artifact, the Heart of Ice. This extraordinarily powerful *elemental heart** and its creator have remained trapped beneath the glacier encasing the temple ever since.

Fizzar Reaction. Although it was locked away, the Aspect's grief and rage were so powerful that ice expanded rapidly across the continent. Fizzars from across Wesden scrambled to repurpose their magical shielding to hold back the encroaching ice age. For many Fizzars, this disaster caused by one of their own brought forth a crisis of philosophy. When the ice was finally contained to the northern mountains, later called the Frostcaps, the Fizzars gathered in the city of Halara that had first birthed their science. Regent Aom'jao of the eluran Luzos Regency oversaw a solemn conference that ended with the Fizzars agreeing to cease their meddling with nature's balance.

The Great Dismantling. The fallout from the Shattering led folks across Wesden to abandon Fizzar philosophy in favor of lifestyles that favored harmony with the natural world. Generations of regents in the Tanglewilds and an order of fanatical ex-Fizzars called the Knights of Knowhere worked to destroy all records of Fizzar technology in an attempt to expunge the stain on Wesden's collective memory. Today, Fizzar philosophy and knowledge have all but died out, and even now, there are those who work in the shadows to keep

this forbidden art from falling into the wrong claws.

Forgotten Lore. Today, folk are only vaguely aware of the Fizzars. Even the Tanglefolk, whose jungle home is scattered with remnants of Fizzar glory and hubris, have more folktales than facts about the folk who built them. Fizzar ruins, particularly their Halls of Rime and Reason—hybrids between workshops, libraries, and temples—remain as poorly understood testaments to the artificers. Elsewhere, the Fizzars have entered local legends as "demon-wizards," popular villains in tales meant to scare children and thrill adults. Yet, the innovative and experimental spirit of the Fizzars lives on. In recent years, scroungecraft, the mapach art of haphazard engineering, and cogwork have begun to flourish once more in the paws and talons of gadgeteers. Whether the gadgeteers of today will go down the same destructive path of taking power from nature by force as the Fizzars did or find a better way to innovate without harming nature remains to be seen.

Ice and Fire. The recent events in Humblewood, the appearance of the Aspect of Fire and the destruction of the powerful ice artifact called the Borealus have upset the tenuous balance that the last Fizzars built with their shielding (see the Humblewood Campaign Setting for more information). As the balance of nature shifts, long frozen areas of the Crystal Expanse have begun to melt, revealing new routes and ancient dangers. Deep within the Temple of Rime and Reason, Klaythusar and the Aspect of Water begin to thaw, and should they return, they will undoubtedly shake the world once more.

Traveling in Wesden

CALENDARS

On Everden, there are 360 days in a solar year, divided into 12 months, each lasting 30 days.

There are two major calendars used in Wesden. The Humble calendar originates in Humblewood and is used across the northern and central parts of the continent. In the Humble calendar, years are called songs, and months are called choruses. According to the Humble calendar, the current year is Song 787. Where specific songs are noted in this book, they refer to the Humble calendar. For more information about the Humble calendar, see ***Humblewood Tales***.

The other major calendar is the Luzos calendar, used in the Tanglewilds and wherever the Eluran language is spoken. It reflects both the environment of the jungle and the long history of the Luzos Regency. According to the Luzos calendar, the current year is 3409, as it counts years from the reign of the first regent. While this number is used today, serious historians know it is technically inaccurate. Early regents often adjusted dates to make their own reigns seem longer or scrub the reigns of other regents from the annals of history.

The Humble Calendar

Verse (Season)	Chorus (Month)		
The Dawning Verse (Spring)	Glimmerbreath	Glimmercall	Glimmerhush
The Rising Verse (Summer)	Rayswell	Raytrill	Raycrest
The Falling Verse (Autumn)	Shadesigh	Shadetoll	Shadesway
The Fading Verse (Winter)	Deepdraw	Deepchime	Deepstill

The Luzos Calendar

Season (Translation)	Month (Translation)		
Arr'luh'uz (The Purring Dry Season)	Hres'luz (Secret sun)	Reeth'luz (Outdoor sun)	Rroo'luz (Traveling sun)
	Hrous'luz (Golden sun)	Vohng'luz (Shrewd sun)	Hrov'luz (Hungry sun)
Ahr'av'lah (The Roaring Rainy Season)	Hrehp'lah (Pouncing water)	Kurkh'lah (Invasion of water)	Shehm'lah (Humid water)
	Sohm'lah (Leaf water)	Mohr'lah (Muddy water)	Lehm'lah(Water that is like a weak stranger)

CURRENCY

The different regions of Wesden use different coins, but they are roughly accepted at the same exchange rate across the continent. Using a Firnveldt coin in the Tanglewilds might cause a merchant to react with surprise, but they will almost certainly take it.

The Frostcaps and the Crystal Expanse have no local mint. People there largely use a mixture of coinage from Humblewood and Firnveldt. Although coins are minted in the Stormcrag city of Cleave, much of the region relies on bartering rather than money. Platinum coins are only minted in the Tanglewilds, and the Eluran name Fah-Hrous (meaning "great gold") is used across the continent.

TRANSPORTATION

Traveling across Wesden poses different challenges depending on the region. The Horned Ridge mountain range that divides Humblewood from Firnveldt provides a serious obstacle to all but the most adventurous and determined travelers. Most of the giant insect mounts used in Humblewood can't endure the conditions, and Firnveldt's gargaths are the only beasts reliably capable of making the crossing. Traveling in the Frostcaps poses similar challenges, and reaching the Crystal Expanse requires serious planning and provisioning for explorers wanting to venture into the frozen north.

In contrast, Firnveldt and the Tanglewilds enjoy strong trading connections. Herds of gargaths bring loaded wagons across the grasslands, and ships ply the western and southern coasts when they aren't kept in port by storms. Travel here is relatively easy, though wise travelers prefer to travel with a group to defend against the dangers such as the predatory grassbeaks of the grasslands and the tythrans stalking the jungles. River travel is also well developed in both these regions, providing a faster but more expensive route for those able to pay.

Although it lies between Firnveldt and the Tanglewilds, Stormcrag remains quite isolated. Its mountainous terrain and tumultuous weather make travel particularly difficult. Despite this, paths have been cut into the stones by the Stormfolk, and gorges are spanned by sturdy bridges. The fastest way to travel in Stormcrag is to befriend a windwatcher. These reptilian creatures have an unmatched mastery of the skies and have been known to offer rides to folk they like.

Currency

Denomination	**Firnveldt Name**	**Humblewood Name** (Slang)	**Stormcrag Name**	**Tanglewilds Name** (Translation)
Platinum piece (pp)	—	—	—	Fah'hrous (Great gold)
Gold piece (gp)	Gold Roq	Gold acorn (Aller)	Sunround	Hrous (Gold)
Silver piece (sp)	Silver Peb	Silver acorn (Grif)	Starbit	Wawth (Silver)
Copper piece (cp)	Copper Grav	Copper acorn (Darn)	Pawpiece	Meh'wawth (Little silver)

A merchant's earnings from across Wesden.

Nine Simpson

LANGUAGES

Across all of Everden, birdfolk share a common tongue thanks to their mystical connection to the spirits of the air. Thus, the Birdfolk language is used across cultures and regions by birdfolk and non-birdfolk alike for ease of communication, serving as a common tongue in Everden. The written form of Birdfolk is called Humblescratch.

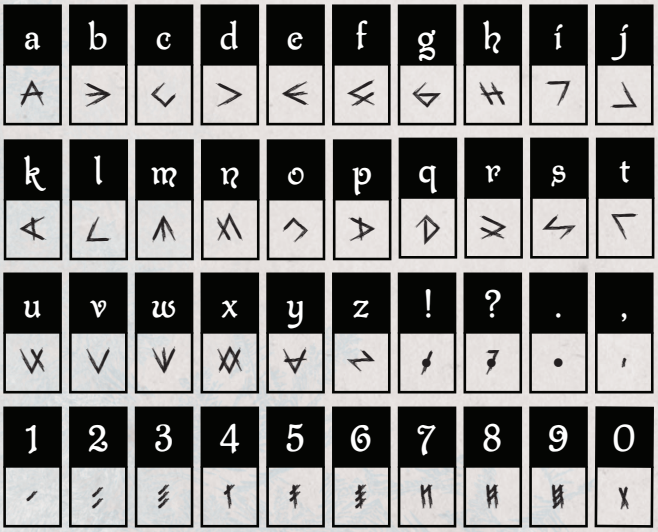
Other languages are spoken more or less widely depending on the region and population. Each language originated with a particular ancestry, but folk of all kinds learn the languages that are most useful and interesting to them. The new languages introduced in this book are:

Capran. Caprans diverged from the Cervan language long ago, and it incorporates a written form of runes. Capran and Cervan speakers can understand some but not all of each other's speech. To others, Capran sounds rhythmic and guttural. Capran literature has a strong tradition of rhetoric, and many of its greatest works take the form of dramatized debates.

Eluran. Eluran is the main language of the Luzos Regency in the Tanglewilds, where it is used as much as Birdfolk. It is filled with soft sounds and combines single-syllable concepts to build complex words. The Eluran script emerged from slashes that early elurans could make with their claws, giving it a looping calligraphic form. Scent is an important element of the written language. A text's meaning can be changed entirely by applying different perfumes to it, such as lending it sincerity or irony, tragedy or comedy. Where scent can't be applied, scent words are often added at the end of sentences to convey emotional intent.

Mustelese. The Mustelese language has the fewest speakers in Wesden. Non-speakers may be surprised by its huge range of tones which vary from deep growls and snarls to chirps and trills. Each tone changes the meaning of a word completely. There is no unique alphabet for Mustelese, so it is written with a modified form of Humblescratch that includes special symbols to indicate tones. There is a strong tradition of oral storytelling in Mustelese. Sagas of revenge and endurance are passed down in families for generations.

Humblescratch Cipher



Tilian. Tilian is described by some as a slippery language thanks to its rapid pace and heavy use of alliteration. It is completely unlike any of the other languages of Wesden, sharing no grammar and little vocabulary with them. A typical Tilian sentence is filled with rhyme, rhythm, and tongue-twisting syllables. The written form of Tilian uses clusters of dots and stripes to form letters, derived from early tilia using their hands to "print" onto leaves. Today, Tilian writers use brushes and inks in vibrant, alchemically derived shades.

Eluran Alphabet

Eluran Letter	Pronunciation	Eluran Letter	Pronunciation
	A		F
	AH		G
	AI		H
	AO		K
	AW		L
	A		M
	AH		N
	AI		P
	AO		R
	AW		S
	E		T
	EE		V
	EH		W
	EI		Y
	EU		Z
	I		RR
	O		HR
	OH		KH
	OO		NG
	OU		SH
	OI		TH
	U		TL
	UH		ZH
	UR		

Eluran Punctuation	Type
	. (period)
	, - (comma or hyphen)
	' (apostrophy)

FACTIONS

There are several groups and organizations that operate across Wesden. Some of these include:

The Tenders. This order of druids and nature mages began in Humblewood hundreds of years ago under the tutelage of the ancient treants. They have been instrumental in dealing with the forest fires plaguing that region and their collaborative attitude with nature is very influential. The Tenders have since spread across Wesden, bringing their combination of druidic sensitivity and scholarly rigor to other regions. Wherever they are found, Tenders work with the local fauna and flora. In the Crystal Expanse, the Sunsworn Tenders monitor the fluctuations in the spreading and receding ice. The Skysworn Tenders work closely with the capran Stonehoof Protectorate, particularly in improving agriculture.
The Tenders of Stormcrag, called the Stormswept, are a loose association of members who work independently compared to the other more hierarchical branches. The most recently established branch of the Tenders is in the Tanglewilds. In the few years they have been operating, these Wildgrowth Tenders have already gained a reputation for bravery in solving problems for both Tanglefolk and the jungle.

The Wesden Explorers' Association. Also known as the Fortune Seekers, this guild of adventurers maintains outposts all over the continent. They offer their members lodgings and camaraderie at their guild houses, which are a popular destination with explorers wanting to swap stories with their fellows. Adventurers can also pick up work from the notices posted by the public at the guild houses. Anyone seeking information, maps, or rumors ahead of their next expedition can find something useful at the Wesden Explorers' Association.

The Khorr'eith. The spy network of the Luzos Regency operates within its own territory and beyond. Most agents are informants, passing news, gossip, and secrets back to base in Halara using ciphers and codes. However, a few are highly trained luhz kehsh warriors capable of infiltration and elimination of threats. The goals of the Khorr'eith are to be aware of any problems that might threaten the Regency and deal with them before they erupt into chaos if necessary. The spy network rarely intervenes directly outside of the Tanglewilds unless there is a direct threat to the Regency. Currently, Pia, the sister of the regent, leads the Khorr'eith, but this fact is kept highly secret even to most members of the network. She uses her role as high priestess of the moon as cover, as have generations of her forebears.

The Knights of Knowhere. This secretive order of paladins is dedicated to safeguarding ancient Fizzar knowledge. They operate from a fortress deep within the Stormcrag mountains, but their knights are scattered across Wesden, searching for and hiding away ancient technology. The order has existed since the Shattering, but it has long forgotten why it obscures all traces of the Fizzars. Despite this lack of self-understanding, the knights operate with intense dedication to their task. They keep their own existence hidden, traveling under various different guises such as scholars, teachers, or traders to better keep their secrets.

Wesden Explorers' Icon

Khorr'eith Icon

Knights of Knowhere Icon

Nine Simpson

Humblewood and Its Hinterlands

Humblewood is a vast land east of the Horned Ridge mountains, covered by the ancient temperate forest from which it derives its name. Between the forest and the Horned Ridge are the muddy swamplands of the Mokk Fields. In the east of Humblewood rise the Crest Mountains, and to the south of the Wood lie the tumultuous shores of the Talongrip Coast.

Alderheart. At the center of the Wood, towering over even the eldest trees, stands the city of Alderheart. Shaped and sculpted by druids into the branches and trunk of a venerable Evertree, Alderheart is the metropolitan hub of Humblewood. Folk from across Everden mingle in the city's bustling markets while the less fortunate scurry through the dark tunnels in its roots. Many adventurers get their start in the Great Tree City, soon finding their journeys taking them all across Wesden.

Divided Folk. In Humblewood, there has long been a cultural and social distinction between the birdfolk and the humblefolk, which is far less present elsewhere in Wesden. In recent years, tensions have risen between the birdfolk of Alderheart and the humblefolk that live in the greater Humblewood forest, driven by mysterious wildfires that pushed them out of their homes. Despite the recent quelling of the flames and the defeat of the Aspect of Fire that caused them, some humblefolk still harbor mistrust for those in power in Alderheart.

Venturing Beyond Humblewood. Many well-worn wagon roads stretch westward and northward from the forest, leading to several dangerous paths over both the Horned Ridge and the ice-covered Frostcap mountains. These routes are well known to travelers, and local guides make their living leading adventurers and merchants safely through the dangerous passes. Particularly brave travelers can also find their way to Firnveldt via the still-under-construction Underway, a subterranean river tunnel dug straight through the rock.

More information about the Humblewood region can be found in the ***Humblewood Campaign Setting*** and ***Humblewood Tales***.

A humble research station looks out over the Horned Ridge Mountains

Makenna Karp

The Crystal Expanse

THE CRYSTAL EXPANSE

A blizzard paints the world white. Wind tears at you, threatening to push you over on the slippery ice and snow beneath your feet. Yet up ahead, you see blue light, bright enough to shine through the whiteout. A spike of vivid, glowing blue crystal juts from the frozen ground, its origin a mystery.

The Crystal Expanse is a wide archipelago that lies to the north of Wesden across the Bladesea. Ice covers the land and sea year-round. The western region of the Expanse, called Bitterland, is largely unexplored save for the coasts; the central area, Endridge, is dominated by massive glaciers, and folk spend the summers here in a handful of settlements and research stations. To the northeast, the chain of islands called the Crystal Wastes comprise the most dangerous and desolate portions of the Crystal Expanse.

The Shattering. The Crystal Expanse was not always such a cold and forbidding place. 1,600 years ago, the archipelago was connected to Wesden and had a far warmer climate. However, when a world-changing Fizzar experiment attempting to control the power of the **Aspect of Water*** shattered the continent, the islands of the Crystal Expanse were formed, and the region became locked under a blanket of ice. The Aspect's frigid power infuses the landscape and the creatures here, though there has been no sign of the primordial elemental itself since the Shattering.

Crystal Tears. Among all the extraordinary sights in the Crystal Expanse, the crystals that gave the region its name are among the most beautiful and mysterious. These massive blue obelisks glow with an eerie light. When the swirling auroras overhead shine their brightest, they seem drawn toward the tips of the crystals. All attempts at taking a sample to study the crystals have failed, as their surface is impenetrable. Some believe the spires are magically infused ice, while others think they are arcane stones crafted by those who lived here before the Shattering. The crystals range in size from the height of a brightfang mustel to as tall as trees.

Newcomers to the Crystal Expanse are warned not to touch the crystals, as doing so produces visions of plunging into an endless, tumultuous expanse of water and a feeling of anguish, which gives them the name of Crystal Tears. Folk living in encampments near a crystal watch out for those who have become lost in this watery reverie despite the warnings. The hidden truth behind the Crystal Tears is that they were created by the Aspect of Water's grief when it was sealed away inside a Fizzar battery. Folk who touch the crystals experience an echo of its misery and torrential power.

Travel. Trekking through the Crystal Expanse is not an expedition to be taken lightly, but for those with immense determination, proper equipment, and warm coats, it is an unforgettable experience. The region possesses unparalleled beauty—the light reflecting through the crystals and ice creates glittering landscapes that, at certain times of day, seem to glow with an internal light. If the adventurers are particularly lucky, they may witness the most striking natural phenomenon of the north: the auroras, a spectacular light show of dancing blue, greens, and purples that illuminate the night sky.

Most explorers in the region use skimmers, flat-bottomed sleds that can also be used as a boat for short-range travel. Skimmers catch the strong winds that whip across the expanse in their sails, but a lack of wind or an unlucky direction of a gale can strand unlucky travelers.

Dangers. Countless explorers have been lost to the sudden collapse of a glacier wall, the icy embrace of a crevasse, or whiteout storms that trick the senses. The cold saps explorers' energy, and anyone who ventures out unprepared is surely doomed.

While few folk live here, the Crystal Expanse is far from lifeless. This land is the domain of the giant **maulruses*** who live above and below the frozen seas. **Slushy slimes*** rely on freezing temperatures to keep their icy bodies from melting. Seabirds wheel overhead near the coasts. There are also rumors of creatures that look like folk appearing in storms and snatching up unlucky folk from their beds. What no one knows is that these creatures are the **frostburned***.

New Expeditions. Since the rise of the Aspect of Fire in Humblewood, new ocean routes have formed between the major landmasses as some of the archipelago's ice has melted. This melting has begun to release the Crystal Expanse's secrets from their tomb of ice, drawing increasing numbers of researchers, treasure-seekers, and adventurers.

SETTLEMENTS & LANDMARKS IN THE CRYSTAL EXPANSE

Few dare venture to the encampments scattered across the region, and even fewer folk live here year-round. During the winter, inland conditions are too cold and challenging for even the hardiest explorers to endure, but several settlements have sprung up along the coast.

Slicer's Crash, Frontier Camp

Across the bay from the town of Slicer's Dive is Slicer's Crash. This encampment was the site of the mapach inventor Slicer's disastrous crash on the first voyage of his submarine. It is one of the few places where folk live year-round in the region, thanks to the deliveries of supplies from the Frostcaps. It also sees a lot of traffic, mostly adventurers from the south heading deeper into the Crystal Expanse and those returning from the ice fields heading to warmer climes.

Gulma's Goods. The one general store in town is run out of a large tent by a brightfang mustel named Gulma the Goldfang [she/her]. True to her nickname, one of her fangs is gold. Gulma has a stranglehold on trade in Slicer's Crash and works hard to keep it that way. Her prices for food, expedition gear, and clothing are extortionate, but she's the only option. However, more than money, Gulma is interested in owning unique objects that no one else has, and she is willing to barter to grow her collection.

A mighty maulrus protects her pup

Nina Simpson

The Fortune Seekers' Social Club. The northernmost chapter of the Wesden Explorers' Association has a foothold here in Slicer's Crash. The social club is a windowless hut with dubiously comfortable chairs and a musty backroom where travelers can lay out their bedrolls. Anyone is welcome, regardless of membership, but guild members usually claim the most comfortable spots. There is a weekly rotation of entertainment, including live music, card night, storytelling, nut chequers, and performances by the fieldscurry jerbeen Hubble Jollylegs [he/him] and his semi-trained **slushy slime***. Though the social club is a humble place, it is always filled with merriment during storms as folk gather to seek comfort and distraction.

FOOD & DRINK IN THE CRYSTAL EXPANSE

Most food is shipped in from the south. Explorers favor dense, rich foods that last a long time.

Gloweed. One of the few plants that grow in the Crystal Expanse, this coastal seaweed gets its name from the green-blue glow it emits at night. When boiled, it becomes soft and edible. It has a strong mineral taste that is generally considered pleasant, and it has many health benefits.

Rowlbert's Advanced Explorers' Biscuits. Made in Humblewood by an enterprising strig, what these biscuits lack in flavor, they make up for in dense nutrition. Explorers often swap tips for making this basic ration more appealing, such as boiling it into a porridge, smearing it with honey, or seeing who can fit the most in their mouth at once.

Snowmash. This strong alcoholic drink is made from berries and lichens that are frozen and then defrosted before being fermented. It is served hot in tiny cups and best sipped slowly.

Rocky Landing, Shipwreck Turned Settlement

Rocky Landing is a small camp located on the shores of the Bitterland region. Around 15 songs ago, the Icebeak, a great icebreaker ship powered by four mighty sails and a crew of mages controlling the weather, magnificently broke through the frozen sea before unceremoniously smashing itself to pieces on the snow-camouflaged coast. This camp built from the wreckage became the first foothold in the Crystal Expanse for explorers from Firnveldt. Wooden ramps and rope bridges connect cabins made from the remains of the Icebeak. Even in summer, icebreaker ships must stop short of the shoreline, and expeditions and deliveries must continue by skimmer.

Leader. The leader of the Rocky Landing expedition is Tunus Pennyfeather [he/him], a stout, white-feathered gallus with an enchanted glass eye that occasionally rolls in a different direction to peek at something of interest. Pennyfeather's jolly personality masks his cunning and ruthlessness, which those living in the encampment rely upon to survive the perils of the icy north. Though not cruel, he feels no remorse for doing what he considers necessary to keep Rocky Landing safe throughout the summer season and make sure all its residents can return to Firnveldt before winter hits.

Rowlbert's Advanced Explorers' Biscuits.

Rowan Holloway

Hugo Solis

Malchis Research Station

Massive metal legs anchor the research station platform to the seabed east of Endridge. The legs adjust to the movement of the sea, keeping the station completely stable while everything around it bobs with the ocean currents. Close to 40 explorers are housed here during the summer months in well-insulated buildings. The largest hut on the platform serves as a dining and recreation space for researchers, while the surrounding cabins hold laboratories, observation sites, accommodations, storage, and more. Around half of the folk stationed at Malchis over the summer are Sunsworn Tenders. They are searching for answers as to what caused the Shattering and how it could be connected to the receding ice.

Pondeglass' Ice Bridges. Northeast of Malchis, eight arced ice bridges connect a scattering of islands. However, explorers who happen upon these ice bridges may become stranded as they melt and reform seemingly at random. A gallus Tender called Pondeglass [he/him] spent three months documenting them but could find no pattern. Nevertheless, he remains obsessed with understanding the bridges' origins and can often be found camped out here.

The Sunspire, Tender Stronghold

The headquarters of the Sunsworn Tenders in the Crystal Expanse is the most dramatic structure in Bitterland. This tall, graceful building stands out against the frozen landscape not solely for its height but also because of the colorful panes of ice that make it up its sides. As there are very few plants to shape in the Crystal Expanse, the Tenders instead shaped vibrant frozen algae to create the colorful stained-glass-like panes of the Sunspire.

The structure has three aboveground levels: the top level provides a lookout station; the middle holds living quarters; and the ground level contains a dining area, a communal space, and supply storage. Beneath these, a subterranean level houses relics, plants, preserved seeds, and casks of a strong beverage called snowmash.

Despite the Sunspire's icy construction, the temperature inside is pleasant thanks to clever engineering and walls lined with insulating algae-ice. During the day, light filters in, while at night no illumination is needed as the glow of three nearby Crystal Tears and the overhead aurora are bright enough to read by.

Auroris Encampment. Clustered around the base of the Sunspire, the Auroris Encampment's tents and shacks were built close together to protect against the cold. This small community has grown thanks to the presence of the Tenders. Some residents are researchers, while others serve as guards and guides for the Tenders during their expeditions into the deep wilderness.

RELIGION IN THE CRYSTAL EXPANSE

With explorers arriving here from across Wesden and beyond, many religious traditions are observed. Though there are no major temples, some folk keep shrines or wear amulets to help them feel connected to one or more of the Amaranthines. Among these, the most popular are Hath the Whisperer and Eresutha the Hidden, as many people seek answers to mysteries among the snow and ice. In winter, daylight lasts for the barest of hours, and some folk who have been cooped up too long claim to have seen the great black shape of Tyton the Nightfather flying through the darkness.

Alannah Rose

Hollow's Reverb, Ancient Trove

The northernmost landform yet reached by explorers is a series of caves created by Fizzars, filled with glittering ice sculptures. At the height of summer, some sculptures melt just enough to reveal the long-dead monsters encased within.

Using energy drawn from elementals, the Fizzars of the past reshaped living creatures into new forms they could use as beasts of burden or weapons of war. During the Shattering, a few of these experiments were preserved in ice within the caves of Hallow's Reverb.

For any adventurous enough to explore the caves, there is a bounty of ancient technology, enchanted items, and rare potions buried there. Experienced explorers attempt to scare off rivals with tales of ferocious monsters being revived when exposed to the smallest bit of body heat. These claims may be exaggerated, but to avoid thawing out the cave's frozen inhabitants, visitors should be mindful about increasing the cave's ambient temperature.

Other Settlements in the Crystal Expanse

Some camps in the Crystal Expanse only last a season or two because of the harsh climate. Others, such as the ones listed, are more established.

Lapis Encampment. The Lapis encampment is run by archaeologists deep in the mountains of Endridge. They are investigating an ancient Fizzar installation that was once used to contain elementals before their energy was extracted.

Orbis Encampment. Orbis remains a great mystery. It was one of the first camps explorers set up in Endridge and was consistently used over several summers. Then it fell silent. A later expedition found everyone at Orbis had been hardened into ice sculptures. The reality of what happened to Orbis remains one of the region's most chilling mysteries, and the place is now abandoned and considered cursed.

Mossbaar. This small settlement in southern Bitterland was recently founded by a group from Firnveldt trying to make a new home. As the permafrost doesn't extend this far south, they believe they can live here permanently.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN THE CRYSTAL EXPANSE

The folk living and working here bring their traditions with them, but there are also new observances celebrated here.

Long Night. For the few folk who overwinter in the Expanse, Long Night is a celebration of the turning of the year. A feast, albeit meager due to the need to ration supplies, is held on the longest night of the year. Folk push back against the dark with singing and merriment. Although the night is filled with candlelight and firelight, a plate of food is set out for the Amaranthine Tyton in recognition of his dominion over dark times.

Tooth and Maw. The icy wide plains of the arctic region gave rise to a new sport in the Crystal Expanse. Tooth and maw is a game played by two teams using sticks to push a sizable, disc-like seed into the opponent's goal. The larger encampments have around half a dozen four-player tooth and maw teams. Despite the difficulties, some keen players are trying to establish a proper tooth and maw league so different camps can compete against each other. The sport has also started to spread to the Frostcaps.

NPCS IN THE CRYSTAL EXPANSE

Use the NPCs in the table to inspire adventures and encounters in this region.

d8	NPCs
1	Scarl Bergbeak [he/him] is an eccentric, white-feathered strig. While lost in a blizzard, he was saved by a **maulrus***. Now, he tries to convince others that the maulruses aren't beasts but sapient creatures.
2	The Slicer's Knives are a rowdy team of tooth and maw players led by a vulpin captain named Kettu Blancruse [she/her]. The Knives are always looking for new opponents or, failing that, new fans.
3	Neeli Thistlefluff of Altumaroo [she/her], a vivacious rockburrow jerbeen, runs Thistlefluff's Snowy Sundries. This former adventurer changed careers after realizing how often she would forget the one exact thing she needed while out in the wilds. She carries her goods on a brightly-colored skimmer between different camps. Neeli makes the trip back to Altumaroo twice a season to restock her wares.
4	A spiny hedge named Victa Rustlehedge [they/them] is a young Sunsworn Tender. They want to carry out their duties tending to a patch of gloweed but are struggling to adjust to the cold.
5	Olver Whitetail [he/him] is a yantan capran guide who leads folks across the Crystal Expanse for a small fee. He is relentlessly sarcastic. Olver has a large scar across his chest and shoulder that aches a day before the weather is going to change.
6	JararmapoppingofseaweedSimcreakofAltoh BaWa [she/her], a seeta bard, seeks unique sounds from remote natural locations to add to her performances. She has heard tales of spiraling ice formations, which create a beautiful haunting melody when the wind blows, and she wants to add their sound to her repertoire.
7	Akali from Schist [they/he] is an arma hedge student from Axxin University researching **slushie slimes***.
8	Sabi [she/her] and Marjoram the Unrepentant [they/them], a mapach astronomer and a longdance mustel oceanographer, are investigating why several stars are not visible in the night sky's reflection in areas where glaciers have recently melted.

ADVENTURES IN THE CRYSTAL EXPANSE

Use the following adventure hooks as inspiration for running games in the Crystal Expanse.

Hitting the Big Slime (low level). Hubble Jollylegs' semi-trained **slushy slime*** goes wild in the Fortune Seekers' Social Club, smashing card tables and attacking patrons. As Hubble (**scout**) tries to get his slime under control and stop the club members from hurting it, there is a rumble from outside. Wave upon wave of slushy slimes advance on Slicer's Crash. What has drawn them here, and can the party save the camp from a slushy end?

Lost in Tears (mid level). The party is hired to go on a rescue mission. A group of Tenders went out to examine one of the Crystal Tears, and they were expected back days ago. When the party arrives, they find the Tenders locked in watery enchantment, touching the crystal. Forcing any Tender to let go of the crystal causes them to scream and flail back toward the great blue spike. But the Tenders are frigid and close to death after long exposure to the cold. How can the party find a way to free them from the Crystal Tear without leaving their minds behind in the Tear's ocean of sadness?

Not So Nice Ice Giants (high level). After being attacked by explorers one too many times, the maulruses of the Crystal Expanse gathered together in a conclave. They have decided to push the folk out of their lands by force. Can the party save the folk who live and work here from the angry maulrus giants, or perhaps broker peace between the maulruses and the explorers?

A friendly game of tooth and maw in full swing

Nine Simpson

Riccardo Piovan

The Frostcaps

THE FROSTCAPS

A fast-flowing river roars through the valley filled with still mountain air. Ice creeps across the river surface, heralding the end of the brief summer. In the shadow of the mountains, your breath plumes in the crisp air.

At the northern end of the continent of Wesden, the Horned Ridge alps give way to the Frostcaps. A heavy layer of snow and ice covers the Frostcaps mountains year-round. Crisp, fast rivers wind between the peaks and feed deep, icy-cold lakes of clear water. The Frostcaps may be dangerous and rugged, but they also contain wide, untouched expanses; the smell of pine; vast stillness; and spectacular views.

Life in the Frostcaps. Settlements in the Frostcaps are few and far between, and those who choose a life in the remote peaks tend to be fiercely independent and love the quiet frontier. As the frozen ground is unsuitable for farming, hunting and fishing are essential skills to feed a family.

Frostfolk. Despite treasuring their profound independence, Frostfolk are incredibly hospitable to guests. Often, the kindness of a stranger is the only thing sparing a traveler from the elements, so a clean bed, a hot meal, and a friendly ear are easily found. However, overstaying this welcome or abusing that trust has a high price—Frostfolk know how to defend themselves and aren't afraid of a fight.

THE FROSTCAPS' FIZZAR PAST

There are tales that the Frostcaps hide ruins of ancient cities that were once sites of great power. There, demon-wizards reshaped living creatures and performed world-shaking magic. To this day, folk still hear the peaks humming with residual magic. Such stories are told to warn children against venturing too deep into the wilderness.

In truth, arcane scientists called Fizzars once lived in these lands, performing their experiments and draining elementals of their power. Traces of their research facilities are still hidden in the mountains and beneath the town of Altumaroo.

SETTLEMENTS & LANDMARKS IN THE FROSTCAPS

Altumaroo, Local Hub

Altumaroo is the closest thing in the Frostcaps to a major settlement. A few thousand folk live in this town that is nestled at the head of the Songside River Valley on Lake Maroo.

A Town on a Town. Altumaroo is built on and from the ruins of a pre-Shattering settlement. Before the Shattering, an enormous, bustling city stood here, a hub of magic, science, and power. Today, all that remains of the original metropolis is a massive disc of crumbled foundation that projects into Lake Maroo, atop which the modern town is built. A few standing buildings have been reused, but most of the town was built from the rubble of the previous city. Walls often incorporate ancient carvings, and the most common are representations of the Amaranthine of innovation, Gesme.

Cultural Hub. As the only major settlement for hundreds of miles, Altamaroo draws folk living in the Frostcaps whenever they want companionship, mundane or magical healing, or goods they can't make themselves. This makes Altumaroo a lively and welcoming town. Those fortunate or dedicated enough to reach it are treated to music, dancing, storytelling, and poetry as folk come together to swap stories and share good times.

The General Store. The largest of the shops in Altumaroo is the General Store run by Yaozeng [she/her], a large-pawed, gray-furred moon eluran. She has cultivated good relationships with the intrepid traders who travel here from Firnveldt and Humblewood, allowing her to stock a wider variety of goods than can be found elsewhere in the Frostcaps. Yaozeng sells her goods at far more reasonable prices than those found further north in places like Slicer's Dive, and she is not shy about telling customers this. The store is packed to the rafters with supplies, and Yaozeng's adolescent kittens Wehth'ou [he/him] and Yohngurr [he/him], scramble up and down precipitous ladders to fetch wares for customers.

The Sunsworn Tenders. The Sunsworn branch of the Tenders, mages who work to preserve the balance of nature, long ago split off from the Humblewood branch. While the Tenders of the Scorched Grove heal the damage caused by fires, the Sunsworn Tenders face a colder and slower threat. For hundreds of years, they have been monitoring the environment as the Frostcaps have warmed. While some believe that it was the Aspect of Fire bringing about the change, others are concerned that whatever caused the Shattering long ago is becoming unstable once more and could make sea levels rise or plunge Wesden into an age of ice should it awaken.

The Treekeeper of the Sunsworn Tenders is a white-furred vulpin named Cain of the Flowering Tundra [he/him]. Though hotheaded members of the order believe they should be pushing back against retreating ice, Cain prefers to wait and watch. In the meantime, he has become obsessed with understanding the Shattering and the mages that he believes caused it. Cain often sponsors expeditions to the Crystal Wastes to look for remnants of ancient magic as he believes understanding it will help the Tenders know what to do about the melting in the region.

The Sunsworn Tenders are based in Altumaroo, but they can also be found across the frozen north on research expeditions. They can be recognized by their dark blue robes, trimmed in white. Their headquarters is a tall building near the center of town. Its huge blocky blue-gray stones were reclaimed from the ruins of the previous city. Inside, lower-ranked Tenders organize the exhaustive backlog of records gathered by their colleagues in the Frostcaps. The Sunsworn Tenders also keep the largest magical archive and library in the region. Most of the texts are concerned with natureand archaeology, but there are a few tomes containing other disciplines.

Altumaroo School. While children in the Frostcaps learn the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, and survival skills from their families, those seeking to further their education can attend the school in Altumaroo. It was established 70 songs ago by a longdance mustel named Sage the Openminded [she/her] after she returned from the great academic city of Axxin in the Tanglewilds. Wanting the Frostfolk to have more formal educational opportunities, she sunk her entire fortune into creating the school. Today, Sage's daughter, Thyme the Erudite [she/her], runs the school. She carries out Sage's vision with great vigor and believes anyone can learn if given the chance.

Alongside literature and mathematics classes, students can study magic and various crafts. Both adults and children attend the school. Students whose homes are too distant to make the journey to school each day can choose to stay with host families in Altumaroo. Though the school is small, it is filled with lively discussion.

The rebuilt town of Altumaroo

RELIGION IN THE FROSTCAPS

In the wild landscape of the Frostcaps, folk find solace in the worship of various Amaranthines. The proximity to Firnveldt and his teachings of endurance make Arghan the Unbroken popular among many. In some remote places, the vulpin patron Kren is openly worshipped in her aspect as the Amaranthine of cunning.

Ranzang's Lodges. Scattered across the Frostcaps are simple cabins, fortified caves, and underground bunkers ready for any weary traveler to seek shelter within. These lodges are marked with the holy symbol of Ranzang. A few faithful clerics perform a year-round sacred pilgrimage, visiting the lodges in a circuit to restock vital supplies.

Nina Simpson

Slicer's Dive, Adventurous Port

Slicer's Dive is the last stop before reaching the Crystal Expanse. It was named after one of its earliest residents, a mapach gadgeteer called Slicer, who had a dream of creating a submarine to dive under the sea ice. Slicer's first voyage set off from here but ended in tragedy on the other side of the bay, also giving the camp of Slicer's Crash its name.

Last Stop. Slicer's Dive is a rough town with few comforts. Most folk here endure harsh conditions in the hopes of making enough money to retire somewhere warmer by selling supplies at exorbitant prices to those foolish enough to head even further north. Explorers, researchers, and adventurers pass through on their way to the Crystal Expanse, and folk are cagey about what treasures they are hoping to find.

The Docks. The docks at Slicer's Dive are run by the gruff cervan Gren Mosshoof [they/them]. Gren is one of the wealthiest folk in town, partly due to their willingness to take bribes to look the other way when checking goods coming in and out of Slicer's Dive. The wooden docks are rough but well-maintained, and Gren's crew of dockworkers keeps them free of sea ice in the winter.

Slicer's Dream Submarines. A maran raptor named Hesper Follyfeather [she/her] continues the work of her mentor Slicer, whose ill-fated submersible remains a local legend. Hesper has built a cogwork submarine named the Blue August, shaped like a swimming duck. Most folks in town don't believe Hesper will have any more success than Slicer did, but she remains determined to explore the seabed.

The Last Drop Inn. One bright point in this otherwise gray town is the Last Drop Inn. Run by a cheerful tilia named Fennillia Fannulia [she/her], the inn offers hot food, comfortable beds, and live music most nights. Fennillia keeps the fireplaces blazing for her own comfort, and when she must go out, she bundles herself up against the cold.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN THE FROSTCAPS

Small settlements and homesteads mark the anniversaries of local events, such as the arrival of the first spring flowers or commemorating the death of a prominent ancestor. The major celebrations across the region include:

Altumaroo Song Contest. Bard and amateur singers from across the region come together in Altumaroo for a great song contest in the coldest part of the year. Each performer presents a song of their own devising that tells a story from their own life or someone they know. The songs are judged on their musicality, narrative, and the performer's skill. The winner of the contest is awarded a silver chalice.

Khaluz's Return. The sunrise on the day after the shortest day of the year is met with great jubilation and celebrations of the Amaranthine Khaluz. Folk stay up all night to greet the rising sun with cheers, music, and twirling dances. The hope is that by catching the sun Amaranthine's attention, she will bless the year ahead with good weather.

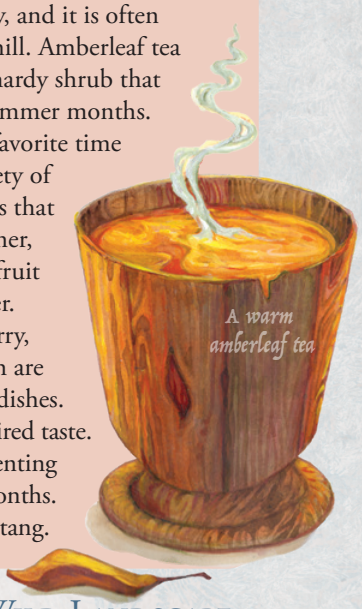
FOOD & DRINK IN THE FROSTCAPS

While little farming occurs in the Frostcaps, there is still a vibrant local cuisine. Much of the food comes from hunting, gathering, and fishing.

Amberleaf Tea. This popular drink is served piping hot. Its spicy flavor warms the body, and it is often given to folks who have caught a chill. Amberleaf tea is made from the dried leaves of a hardy shrub that grows close to the ground in the summer months.

Frostcap Jams. Jam season is a favorite time of year for young folk. A huge variety of jams are made from the wild berries that grow in the Frostcaps. In late summer, families venture out to gather ripe fruit to preserve them for the long winter. The most popular types are songberry, fireberry, and wingberry jam, which are served with both sweet and savory dishes.

Popplu. This delicacy is an acquired taste. Popplu is made by salting and fermenting squid guts in brine for over three months. It has a rubbery texture and intense tang.

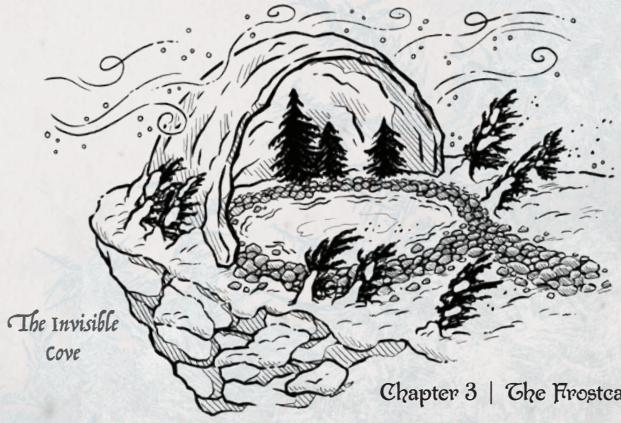

A warm amberleaf tea

Songside River Valley, Wild Landscape

Outside of Altumaroo, most folk live in the low-lying Songside River Valley. Here, it is just warm enough for dense forests to grow, obscuring mountainside caves. Curious floating lights, thought to be the lost spirits of the demon-wizards who once lived here, can often be glimpsed through the trees. Dangerous predators such as **dire mountain lions*** appear from the shadows. When the wind blows down the valley from the north, the mountains seem to sing together in a haunting, beautiful harmony that evokes a lament. Outposts in various states of abandoned deterioration dot the landscape, and a few scattered villages cling to the river's edge or hide from the cold in the mountain caves.

The Invisible Cove, Strange Landmark

Atop one of the Frostcap's eastern peaks is a half dome of glass-clear ice. Once a full dome, subtle heat from deep beneath melted the eastern side into a small, perfectly circular lake. The western side remains frozen by the Frostcaps' frigid winds, protecting visitors from the buffeting winds as they look out from the mountain top. Some claim the lake's water has special restorative powers and folks travel great distances to take a chilly dip at sunrise, hoping to cure their ailments.


The Invisible Cove

David Hoffrichter

Nine Simpson

Other Settlements in the Frostcaps

The scattered settlements across the Frostcaps are made up of no more than a pawful of homes, but most families live in isolated homesteads. Some small Frostcap settlements include:

Arkton. Legends say this small coastal village was founded by a stranger from a distant northern land who walked to the Frostcaps by way of the frozen Song Sea. The stranger's name has been lost to history, but she was a huge, white-furred cleric of an Amaranthine unknown in Wesden. A rough stone statue of her stands in the center of the village. Though its features are heavily timeworn, the ears, snout, and paws of a figure resembling a bear are still visible. The folk of Arkton have a reputation for being the best sailors in the region.

Lost Map. This cluster of homes and workshops is cut into the side of Mount Esshorn in the south of the Frostcaps. Its residents cheerfully explain that it was founded after an expedition gave up trying to reach the Crystal Expanse when their map was lost in a flash flood. In defiance of this inauspicious origin, Lost Map is one of the best places to hire a wilderness guide in the region.

Nem. Located on the banks of the Songside River, this small but colorful village is home to many artists who moved here from across Wesden and beyond. The villagers work on their wildly original creations, unrestrained by any pre-existing artistic traditions or expectations. Life is not easy here, and even the most successful artists also work as hunters and fishers to support themselves.

Swift's Stop. This single longhouse is only occupied in the summer months by a family of sylphs. The Cleave-Swiftstops have been journeying here for generations. They leave their home unlocked in the winter in case it is needed by desperate travelers. A painted sign inside asks that payment be left for any supplies used and that visitors leave the story of how they came here in the guestbook. The guestbook has dozens of entries and contains useful information for anyone exploring the area.

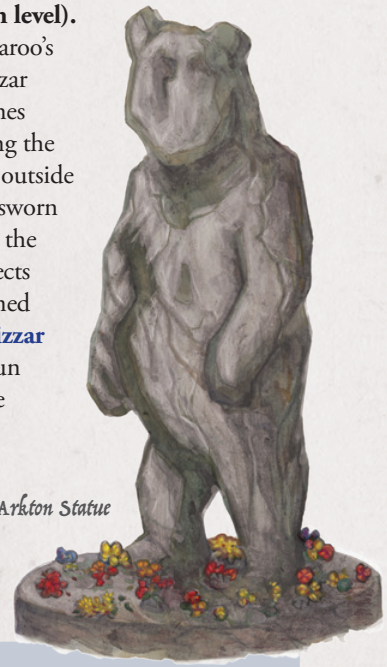
ADVENTURES IN THE FROSTCAPS

Use the following adventure hooks as inspiration for running games in the Frostcaps.

Long Night in the Lodge (low level). The party is asked to escort a group of children from Altumaroo School back to their homes ahead of the celebration of Khaluz's Return. On the way, a storm blows in, and they must take shelter in one of Ranzang's lodges. The party must find a way to keep the scared children calm and safe as a **hollowing*** riled up by the winds rages outside.

Gesme's Gift (mid level). A thief stole a valuable artifact from the Alderheart Museum in Humblewood and fled to the Frostcaps. The party is tasked with tracking them down and retrieving the artifact, a statue of the Amaranthine of innovation, Gesme, that originally came from the Frostcaps. Along the way, they have to contend with **dire mountain lion*** attacks, blizzards, and traps laid by the thief. Will they catch up with the thief and perhaps discover the thief's reasoning for stealing the artifact?

Altumaroo Out of Time (high level). Strange lights appear under Altumaroo's foundational disc as an ancient Fizzar device reactivates. The town becomes trapped in a time loop, experiencing the same day over and over as the folk outside can only watch in horror. The Sunsworn Tenders prepare special charms for the party to protect them from the effects and ask them to enter the imprisoned town and shut down the device. **Fizzar constructs*** have awoken and begun carrying out ancient orders that are endangering the townsfolk.



Arkton Statue

NPCS IN THE FROSTCAPS

Use the NPCs in the table to inspire adventures and encounters in this region.

d6	NPCs
1	Jelf Riverbow [they/them] is a maran raptor guide. They know the Frostcaps well and specialize in getting travelers safely to Slicer's Dive. Jelf spends most of their profits on teas imported from Firnveldt.
2	The Rockhocks are a family of caprans living deep in the mountains. The father, Lomu [he/him], tried to expose corruption in the Mandrabaar branch of Firnveldt's Velden Guard and fled reprisal with his two children, Lovu [she/her] and Mulu [they/them], after his boss threatened them.
3	Winger Nectarnip [she/her] is a sylph explorer who recently arrived in Slicer's Dive. She bought a map of the Crystal Expanse marked with the location of an ancient treasure from a corvum bartender at the Last Drop Inn named Marax [she/her]. She hasn't worked out that the map is a fake.
4	Amreth [he/him] is a moon eluran hermit. He studies the natural magic of the mountains and will teach anyone brave enough to reach his remote cave.
5	Rufi [he/him] is a brightfang mustel staying in Altumaroo with the Barrelpaw family of rockburrow jerbeens while he attends school. He and the eldest Barrelpaw son, Loo [he/him], call each other brother. They often get into trouble because of the wild dares they give each other.
6	A strig named Emmelina of the Spring Thaw [she/her] is an eager young Tender recently transferred from the Humblewood branch. She feels the Sunsworn Tenders are too cautious and should be more active in stabilizing the retreating ice.

David Hoffrichter

Josiah Cameron

Firnveldt

A cloud of dust rises into the air as the herd of gargaths approaches. Their hooves rumble the earth. Low bellows mingle with the peel of bells and shouts from the herders. All around, the grasslands stretch as far as you can see, touching the vast blue sky at the horizon.

Firnveldt is a wide land encompassing sweeping grasslands, deep forests, and high peaks. It lies west of Humblewood, stretching between the Horned Ridge Mountains and the Bladesea. Due to the cold air and rain that blows in from the ocean, the weather here is harsher than the milder climate found east of the mountains. Today, Firnveldt is home to gargaherds guiding enormous herds of **gargaths*** through the grasslands, famed markets and ports bustling with food and trade, and folk who carry Arghan's fearless, adventurous spirit. Firnveldt is divided into three major regions, the Gargan Steppe, Rimewood, and the Horned Ridge, each with its own ecosystem and way of life.

HISTORY OF FIRNVELDT

The region known as Firnveldt has been inhabited for thousands of songs. For most of that time, folk lived simple lives, herding gargath on the steppe or finding subsistence in Rimewood. There was no recorded history in the region until around 700 songs ago, save for an oral tradition of tales and myths. Some of these legends tell of a demon-wizard called Fiss-Orh, who almost destroyed Firnveldt in a terrible ice age but was defeated by the Amaranthines Arghan and Gesme.

The Clan Wars. The period known as the Clan Wars stretched over nearly 250 songs. During this time, the capran clans fought against each other first for resources and the best grazing routes, but over the generations, the conflicts became fueled by revenge. Alliances formed but were swiftly broken as each clan tried to carve out its place on the steppe. Other Veldfolk, such as galluses, vulpins, and mustels, were considered convenient sources of loot for the clans and suffered greatly from their raids. Violence and fear were ever present.

Harbarya Stonehoof. A capran by the name of Harbarya was born into the Stonehoof Clan 500 songs ago. His birth coincided with the near utter destruction of his clan by the rival Goreheart Clan. The infant, Harbarya, was carried away by his elder brother Kartanya into the Horned Ridge Mountains, where he grew into a tough and strategic warrior. When he came of age, Harbarya returned from the mountains, gathered what was left of his clan, and shared his plan to attack the far more powerful Gorehearts. Only seven warriors agreed to accompany him.

Using his knowledge of the landscape and well-trained war gargaths, Harbarya and his companions won an unexpected victory against the Goreheart Clan. As Jella, the leader of the Goreheart Clan, knelt before him in defeat, Harbarya chose to spare her life; his goal had never been revenge but to end the Clan Wars. He offered the defeated Goreheart leader a place at his side in exchange for her loyalty, and she agreed.

Together, the Stonehoofs and Gorehearts won victory after victory, earning Harbarya the title Inevitable Warlord. After every victory, Harbarya would offer the defeated clan leader the same choice he offered Jella—join him or die. Word spread of Harbarya's victories, and soon clans offered complete surrenders before any blood was spilled. Other Veldfolk joined Harbarya's forces too, allowing non-caprans an opportunity to control their own destiny without the chaos of the Clan Wars defining them.

Lord Protector Raf and their sylph adviser, Hurtle

Rise of the Stonehoof Protectorate. Fifty songs after Harbarya's first battle, he and his forces joined the other clans at Caprabaar for the Great Gathering. In those days, the Great Gathering was one of the few times that the clans met off the field of battle. On this occasion, Harbarya declared himself lord protector, established the Stonehoof Protectorate and brought about the end of the Clan Wars. Although there was minor resistance, the clans embraced the possibility of peace and stability promised by the Stonehoof Protectorate.

Harbarya made Caprabaar his seat of government and transformed the camp into a permanent city. He founded the Velden Guard, a military force made up not of a single capran clan, but many. Harbarya enlisted other Veldfolk, such as birdfolk, vulpins, and mustels, declaring them equals under his new system of government. With the Velden Guard providing protection from bandits, raiders, and other threats, the clans lay down their weapons and focused on herding. Many Caprabaaran herders banded together to form groups called "trips." Generally diverse, one trip could include members of various clans as well as unaffiliated Veldfolk.

From the beginning of his rise to power, Harbarya chose suitable allies to fill the roles of generals, administrators, and advisors rather than favoring his own clan. His philosophy was that excellence could be found anywhere, even in an enemy's camp. This fueled resentment among the remaining Stonehoofs. These tensions erupted into a conflict between Harbarya and Kartanya. Kartanya accused his beloved brother of abandoning their clan and disrespecting the traditions of Firnveldt. Unable to resolve their dispute, the siblings dueled. Harbarya, the better fighter of the two, killed Kartanya. Harbarya never let anyone know how he felt about his brother's death, but not long after Kartanya's body was laid to rest, Harbarya made a pilgrimage alone to the holy Stonebell Temples high in the Horned Ridge mountains. The spot in Caprabaar where Kartanya fell to his brother's blade came to be known as the Debate Circle.

Harbarya's Legacy. Harbarya's greatest gift was the lasting peace that has allowed Firnveldt to flourish as a great trading center in the centuries since his death. Many of the Firnveldt's trade routes, administrative systems, and the currency of gold roqs (gp), silver pebs (sp), and copper gravs (cp) were first minted under Harbarya's guidance. Because of this he is idolized by many as the greatest capran to have ever lived, with some even believing that he was a manifestation of the Armanthine Arghan. However, as tensions grew between the Stonehoof Protectorate and the nomadic herders, some Veldfolk now revere Harbarya's brother, Kartanya, as a folk hero and symbol of resistance.

Emory Kjelsberg

The Harsh Hoof of the Protectorate. For centuries, the way of life for those living under the Protectorate remained unchanged. The nomadic trips continued to follow their gargath herds across the plains, and although Caprabaar was now a permanent city, it remained small. Successive lord protectors slowly formalized many of the informal systems that had existed in Firnveldt for generations. Things began to change more rapidly under the rule of Hurtle Stonehoof [she/her], the lord protector who retired only 5 songs ago. She founded the market town of Rimebaar and expanded the city of Mandrabaar, extending the Protectorate's reach into Rimewood and the hills south of the Gargan Steppe. As a sylph, Hurtle used her family connections to open up more trade with the Tanglewilds, leading Caprabaar to more than double in size during her 60-song rule. She also implemented a new registration system for gargath herds. Her stated intentions were to track the health of the herds, prevent gargath rustling, and stop overgrazing of fragile grasslands. Many trips resented Hurtle interfering with their traditions and saw no need to change the ways that had served them for hundreds of songs. The new policies made it harder to move the gargaths according to the traditional ways of weather watching, and clashes between trips and the Velden Guard became more frequent. With herding becoming less flexible and profitable, more folk moved into the cities.

Current Strife. This tension between the traditional nomadic trips and the settled forces of the Protectorate has only worsened in recent songs. Many in Rimewood also resent the Protectorate's interference and the increased presence of the Velden Guard, particularly enforcing taxation and registration not only of gargaths but of all Veldfolk and their movements.

POLITICS OF FIRNVELDT

The current lord protector is a capran named Raf [they/them]. Before inheriting the role from the previous lord protector, they belonged to the Tenno Clan. They are a taciturn tethera capran who rarely lets emotion show on their long face. Although many Veldfolk resent the Protectorate's influence over their lives, others appreciate the stable and predictable governance that Raf brings. Raf was a loyal part of Hurtle's Velden Guard, but now that they govern the Protectorate, they are troubled by the growing tensions in Firnveldt. They do not want to be the first lord protector in 440 songs to allow conflict to break out. Raf is also troubled by the whispers that they are simply a puppet of Hurtle, who is still a prominent citizen of Caprabaar despite her retirement. The new lord protector wants to be admired for their own leadership skills.

Grand Secretary. Raf is advised by Grand Secretary Khando Pluma [she/her], a bright gallus sage. She is the head of the Stonehoof Protectorate's bureaucracy and is convinced the Protectorate is in cultural and moral decline. She believes bringing Rimewood fully into the Stonehoof Protectorate and quelling dissent will reinforce the Protectorate's authority and stability.

Supreme Treasurer. Supreme Treasurer Luza [they/them] is Raf's other chief advisor. They are a moon eluran merchant who supervises the flow of trade, market laws, and foreign diplomacy. Luza is desperate to avoid conflict in Rimewood, preferring to focus Lord Raf's attention on securing the trade roads from Mandrabaar to Cleave and across the Horned Ridge to Humblewood. They are particularly concerned by the rumors that some trips are turning to banditry in protest of the Protectorate's restrictions on where and when they can herd their gargaths. Luza believes that if this is allowed to continue, the peace Firnveldt has long enjoyed will splinter apart once more.

The Lord Protector. As both the general of the Velden Guard and the political leader of the Protectorate, the role of lord protector is both prestigious and heavy with responsibility. The title of lord protector is passed down not to the children of the previous lord, but to an heir they pick from among their closest confidants. When a lord protector ascends to the role, they give up their own clan name or family name and take on the name Stonehoof as a sign of their dedication to the Stonehoof Protectorate over their own family interests. In the centuries since the first lord protector established the Protectorate, the role has been filled not only by caprans but by figures of various ancestries.

The sign of the office of the lord protector is a gold signet ring used to stamp official documents. Each lord protector has a new ring commissioned when they take office. The lord protector's ring is similar to the signet rings used by the leaders of capran clans, but it is far larger and more ostentatious.

Nomadic Trips. The nomadic groups who roam these lands are called trips from the old Capran word for family. These trips continue to live according to the old rhythms of life on the steppe. They travel with the wind amongst the waving grasses, herding gargaths—enormous, furry, creatures for which the Gargan Steppe is named—and pausing for extended times to trade handicrafts, gargath meat, wool, and cheese for wood, metal, and other supplies.

The trips believe that freedom is the key to survival and that only fools think anything to be certain. Treasuring the wide-open sky and endless stars, they prefer to travel the plains, going to wherever they feel they are most needed. Many resent the settled ways that the Stonehoof Protectorate promotes, but they have little martial power compared to the Velden Guard. Thus far, hostilities have not broken out openly, as neither side wants to be responsible for breaking the peace that has reigned in Firnveldt for centuries. Still, some among the trips argue that they should use their greater knowledge of the steppe to disrupt the Protectorate's trade routes and start training war gargaths once more.

Celia Tang

GARGAN STEPPE

The Gargan Steppe is an immense expanse of grassland that extends from the Horned Ridge out to the coast of the Bladesea. Most of the steppe is covered in lush green garga grass, which can grow as tall as a full grown capran. Thanks to the grazing of the gargaths, the huge yak-like beasts that roam the steppe, most of the fast-growing grasses are kept mown down to a more manageable height. Few trees or shrubs provide cover. During the day, temperatures can soar, while at night they plunge.

Traveling on the Steppe. Travel rarely happens on foot. Most travelers heading to Caprabaar or across the steppe hire guides and covered wagons pulled by gargaths. Trips also welcome travelers heading to the same destination for a small fee or in exchange for skilled work.

Gargath Herding. One of the most ancient professions on the steppe is that of the gargaherd. These skilled animal handlers care for the herds of gargaths as they cross the plains. Some gargaths are domesticated and trained as draft animals who pull wagons. Gargaths graze on the grasses of the plains, trimming them and tilling the soil with their hooves. They are well-adapted to the varying temperatures of the steppe, and their sheared fur is highly prized for its use in textiles. Trips travel light. Rather than carrying tents with them, whenever they stop for the night, they weave shelters for themselves from the living grasses. Used shelters dot the steppe like freckles. At the end of the dry season, they shrivel and blow away on the winds.

Dangers of the Steppe. The sheer scale of the Gargan Steppe means that disorientation and isolation, insufficient supplies, and an inability to navigate the expanse create a challenge for novice guests of the grasslands. Predatory **grassbeaks*** make the tall grasses quiver as they stalk their prey. It is always recommended to travel with an experienced guide or a local when crossing the steppe. Lesser but perhaps more embarrassing threats are the unstable burrows made by **meekrats***. Breaking a leg by stepping in a hole made by these shy creatures has ended the journey of more than one unprepared traveler. Of course, the Gargan Steppe is the domain of the gargaths. Should they become spooked, the thunderous stampede of a gargath herd is a serious threat. However, the dangers of the Steppe belie the immense beauty of the region—the colors of sunrises and sunsets, the seemingly infinite night sky, the quiet of being the only folk as far as the gargath runs, and the freedom to travel wherever the winds might blow.

Trips on the Gargan Steppe

Despite their decline in numbers over the last century, there are still dozens of trips roaming the steppe. These include the following:

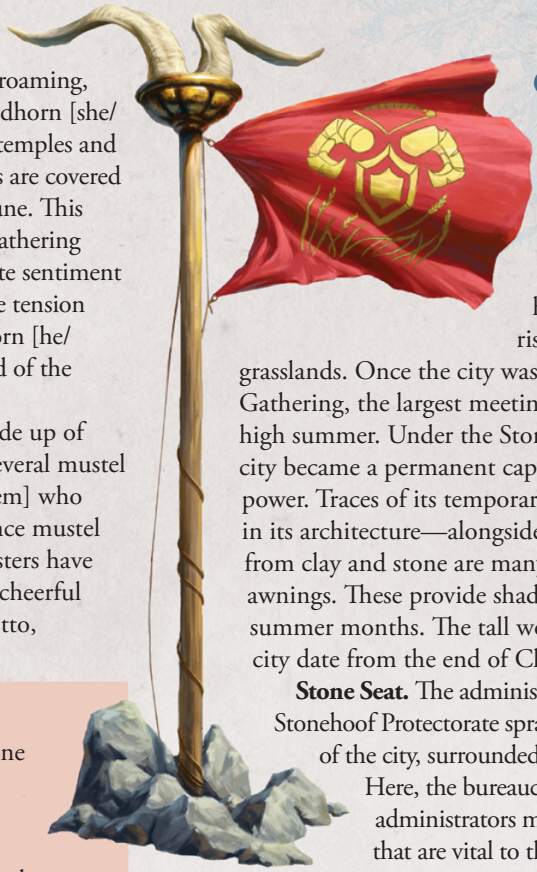
The Astride Trip. Led by tethera capran Jelba Lohsa [she/her], this trip has suffered greatly in recent songs. An illness carried off many of their gargaths, and Jelba's only daughter, Pini [she/her], left last season to seek work in Caprabaar. Jelba is trying desperately to hold her trip together. This has been made all the harder by her discovery that one of her best gargaherds and Pini's former fiance, Faldo Morninghorn [he/him], has taken to attacking Stonehoof-protected caravans and stealing goods. Faldo believes that the wealth of Firnveldt should belong to the trips, not the Protectorate, and that the Astride Trip should turn to banditry.

A temporary home on the Firnveldt

Nina Simpson

The Skywide Trip. One of the largest trips still roaming, the Skywide Trip is led by yantan capran Dandri Redhorn [she/her]. Dandri is highly superstitious and often visits temples and shrines. The harnesses of the Skywide Trip's gargaths are covered with bells, as Dandri believes they ward off misfortune. This trip was fundamental in the formation of the new gathering place of Garganbaar, and anti-Stonehoof Protectorate sentiment is strong amongst its members. This causes explosive tension between Dandri and her elder brother Hadri Redhorn [he/him], who is a high-ranking Velden Guard and head of the Redhorn Clan.

The Three Wheel Trip. This eclectic trip is made up of caprans from the Greenstamp and Maawa clans, several mustel families, and a single gallus named Cobb [they/them] who acts as both chef and doctor. Its leader is a longdance mustel named Bracken the Unlucky [he/him]. Many disasters have befallen this trip, but they maintain a surprisingly cheerful attitude in the face of bad luck, clinging to the motto, "Three wheels are better than none."



Caprabaar, the Capital of Firnveldt

Caprabaar can be seen for miles around as its central towering horn-topped flagpole rises above the rolling grasslands. Once the city was the site of the Great Gathering, the largest meeting of trips and clans at high summer. Under the Stonehoof Protectorate, the city became a permanent capital and the seat of their power. Traces of its temporary origins can still be seen in its architecture—alongside permanent homes made from clay and stone are many brightly colored fabric awnings. These provide shade and shelter during the summer months. The tall wooden walls around the city date from the end of Clan Wars.

Stone Seat. The administrative complex of the Stonehoof Protectorate sprawls over the western side of the city, surrounded by a sturdy wooden fence. Here, the bureaucrats, court officials, and administrators manage the trade routes that are vital to the region. In the center lies the office of Lord Protector Raf Stonehoof, General of the Velden Guard and leader of the Stonehoof Protectorate. Any citizen or traveler in Firnveldt can join the line of folk that forms outside Stone Seat each morning, each hoping for an audience with the lord protector.

Middlesky Market. The Veldfolk of Caprabaar fancy themselves to be at the center of the world. Walking through the Middlesky Market, visitors may be convinced they are right. Folk from across the continent mingle freely, trading goods and sharing news from every corner of Wesden. The Middlesky Market's movable stalls lie under a colorful woven canopy. In the winter, thick walls made from woven gargath wool are erected around the perimeter, and incense-filled braziers are lit, filling the market with warmth and fragrant smoke.

The Debate Circle. Close to the center of Caprabaar an amphitheater is cut down into the ground where any citizen of Firnveldt may open a discussion on a topic and invite disagreement. Should a debate partner enter the circle, the two will argue their cases in a structured manner until a conclusion is reached or the opponents opt to settle the matter through unarmed combat in the circle. One or two debates can be witnessed most days, but superstition holds that on the day before a storm, the Debate Circle will be particularly busy. While minor debates are only attended by the friends of the debaters, major debates between famous thinkers or fighters draw huge crowds of eager onlookers.

FOOD & DRINK IN FIRNVELDT

Thanks to its strong trade routes, Firnveldt cuisine melds many different ingredients that make the most of its varied landscapes.

Gargar. Fermented gargath milk is a popular alcoholic beverage. Gargar is usually served chilled and has a creamy yet pleasantly sour flavor.

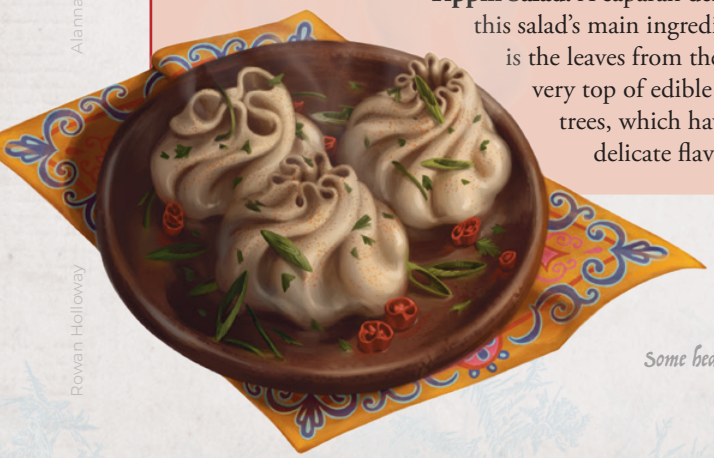
Hoom. These small soft dumplings are filled with various ingredients including gargath meat and wild vegetables. Each settlement traditionally has a different number of folds pleated into the top, from three in Rimeheart to twelve in Mandrabaar.

Rimemead. Made from the honey of sweetbees, this alcoholic beverage has been made in Rimewood for generations. The most highly prized variety comes from the Honeyhearth Monastery.

Romver. Palm-sized pancakes made from the seeds of the garga grass, romvers are served with a variety of preserves including skyberry jam, pickled ringpeppers, and salted bladefish.

Saddle Cheese. This soft white cheese is made from gargath milk. Herders hang bags of milk from their saddles, and the cheese solidifies as they ride across the steppe. It has a mild flavor with a slight tang.

Tippin Salad. A caparan delicacy, this salad's main ingredient is the leaves from the very top of edible trees, which have a delicate flavor.



Some hearty hoom

Alannah Rose

Rowan Holloway

The Great Gathering Festival. Before Caprabaar was established as a year-round city, it was a temporary camp populated only during the Great Gathering. As it was custom, Caprabaar still celebrates the festival of the Great Gathering twice a song. During the festival, all of the best that Firnveldt has to offer is on full display. Competitions of physical strength, martial prowess, and cultural arts are held, and the winners are awarded lavish prizes. The most anticipated events are the archery competition, gargath races, and wrangler stunts. Visitors and Veldfolk are equally welcome to compete.

The August Institute for Arcane Agriculture. All arcane study sponsored by the Stonehoof Protectorate is decidedly practical. The mages and druids of the August Institute for Arcane Agriculture focus on improving farming through both natural and magical means. They have close ties with the Skysworn Tenders, who often attend the institute as visiting lecturers. They are working together on the development of a ring of farms around Caprabaar. As part of the Stonehoof Protectorate's efforts to standardize magical education, it provides funds for anyone wishing to study at the institute or at one of its smaller branches in Rimebaar or Mandrabaar.

MAGICAL EDUCATION IN FIRNVELDT

Anyone looking for a broad magical education won't find it at any of the institutes sponsored by the Protectorate. Instead, they must seek out one of Firnveldt's hermit-wizards, who follow the old tradition of isolating themselves to sharpen their arcane powers. By tradition, these mages are willing to become the mentors of any hopeful apprentice who shows even a little magic potential.

An old sun eluran hermit-wizard

Garganbaar, the New Gathering Place

With the transformation of Caprabaar into a permanent settlement and the Stonehoof Protectorate's increasing taxation and restrictions on the free movement of gargaths, Garganbaar was founded by a collective of trips as a new gathering place for nomads. Twice a song, trips and their herds come together to form Garganbaar. They share news, trade, feast, and engage in diplomatic negotiations. The sometimes-town has existed for less than a century, and it has never reached the scale that Caprabaar enjoyed even before its transformation. Despite this, those who meet at Garganbaar find great hope and solace in this new place where the old ways are respected.

The True Great Gathering. The folk who come together to form Garganbaar claim that the Great Gathering Festival at Caprabaar is no longer truly the Great Gathering as the city does not rely on it. What is called the True Great Gathering at Garganbaar has a festive air. Many of the same competitions and celebrations are held as in Caprabaar but on a smaller scale. However, this version of the Great Gathering has a more serious edge. Folk come together to discuss politics, debate working against the Protectorate, and conclude court cases. Ritual poetic obituaries are chanted by firelight to record those who have died. Many marriages are also held during the gathering, and new trips are formed as others dissolve.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN FIRNVELDT

The Veldfolk celebrate many local festivals that coincide with the changing seasons. Some of the major ones include:

Sylphturn. When migratory sylph Veldfolk return from their southern homes in spring, they are greeted by a festival prepared by their neighbors. Long tables are set out where the sylphs place delicacies from the Tanglewilds alongside the Firnveldt fare prepared for their arrival. Friends catch up on each other's news, and the celebration lasts until sundown.

Tee'Kois' Tears. A shower of meteors lights up the summer skies over Firnveldt. Their pattern was first described by the Tanglewilds eluran astronomer Tee'Kois over 2,000 years ago. During the three nights the meteors are visible, folk celebrate with nighttime viewing parties, laying back to watch the sky and enjoying stardrops, a sweet delicacy made from pounded garga grass seeds. On the last night, folk write their woes on strips of paper and burn them, hoping that their pains will vanish like the falling stars.

Weavenstaampf. Weavenstaampf grew out of young nomads searching for love whenever their trips met at a Great Gathering, but today it is held in all the major settlements of Firnveldt. During the week-long festival, cities shimmer with brilliantly colored flags. Anyone seeking a romantic partner wears a special scarf in vivid hues and vibrant patterns. Dances are held every night to the rhythmic sound of drums and hooves. If a partnership forms during the festivities, the couple weaves together their scarves as a sign of their new commitment. Visitors to Firnveldt homes may see these woven scarves hanging in pride of place.

Celia Tang

Tee'Kois' Tears dazzle onlookers

Nine Simpson

Mandrabaar, Medicinal Market Town

The great market town of Mandrabaar lies on the banks of the Yamaa River where it meets the southern Bladesea. Mandrabaar straddles winding rivers and canals with beautifully painted wooden bridges linking settlements on river banks and islands. Waterways link Mandrabaar to farming villages across the southern hills. These, combined with the trade roads from the steppe and Rimewood, make Mandrabaar the main port of Firnveldt. Best known for its delicious food and powerful medicines, the town was named after the riverbank mandrakes cultivated for healing potions. Mandrakes from the area are mixed with rare mountain flowers from Stormcrag to produce effective ointments and salves. Mandrabaar has become a popular spot for immigrants from the coast of the Tanglewilds. The abundant work on fishing boats and direct access to the continent is an appealing draw to the port.

The Docks and Market. The mouth of the Yamaa River is filled with floating platforms where ships from the distant ports of Cleave and Lah'Keht dock. Mandrabaar's main market is located close by. Here, goods arriving and departing Firnveldt are traded at high speed by auctioneers. Exchanges occur so fast that they can be unintelligible to those unfamiliar with the local dialect of Birdfolk.

Tea Houses. Whether one is seeking tea, medicine, or entertainment, the most famous destinations in Mandrabaar are the great tea houses. These establishments are usually two or even three stories tall and full to the brim with rowdy patrons morning, noon, and night. Competition is fierce for business and rivalries have formed between the tea houses. Even regular patrons have become loyal partisans, pinning flowers to their clothes that represent their favorite house. While this competition tends to be in good fun, at least one confrontation has led to violence—an argument between patrons of the Goldflower and Pinkblossom houses turned into a grand melee that tore through the streets and canals.

The Grand Floating Academy. The foremost medical training and research institution in Firnveldt, the Grand Floating Academy is famed across Wesden for its healing. Here, mages and physicians work to push the bounds of medicine. The academy is built on a massive barge, and once it travelled up and down the waterways of Mandrabaar and along the coast to wherever it was needed. Now, the barge remains moored permanently north of Mandrabaar Market as it has been stacked with so many laboratories, libraries, and lecture halls that it risks capsizing were it not anchored to the shore.

The Grand Floating Academy is sturdier than it looks

Alannah Rose

RIMEWOOD

The evergreen Rimewood receives frequent rain compared to the drier steppe. This turns to significant snow as temperatures drop during the frigid winters. The forest floor is covered with a thick layer of tree needles from the evergreens that make up most of Rimewood. In the warm months, paths are swept through the dry needles by the passage of folk traveling between perches.

Life in Rimewood. Rimewood has strong cultural connections with Humblewood as many of its inhabitants are descendants of Humblefolk and Birdfolk who made the dangerous crossing over the mountains in search of safety following the Great Calamity, a terrible fire that ravaged the region. Rimewood is famed for its weaving, dying, and embroidery of textiles. The inhabitants favor bright reds and rich yellows for their distinctive tunics and billowing dresses.

Scattered Politics. The forest is dotted with small woodland perches. Each one operates independently, directed by local elders, under the oversight of the Rime Council, which in turn is overseen by the Stonehoof Protectorate. The council's influence is strongest in the south but barely acknowledged toward the remote northern edge of Rimewood.

Rimebaar, Protectorate Hoofhold

Rimebaar, a market town, lies on the southern edge of Rimewood, where the Gargan Steppe touches the forest. It was established around 50 songs ago by the previous lord protector in an effort to improve trade between Rimewood and the rest of Firnveldt. The market town has quickly grown to become Rimewood's second-largest settlement. Rimebaar blends the architecture and culture of the steppe and the wood, making it a unique and vibrant place. Rimebaar residents believe that rest and recovery are essential to a life well-lived, and the city attracts many visitors seeking relaxation from Caprabaar and even further afield.

The awnings of the Rimebaar market

Rimebaar Market. Constructed in a style that blends steppe and perch architecture, Rimebaar Market is covered with a canopy of colorful awnings strung between low tree branches. Here, shoppers find honey and beeswax products from the Honeyhearth Monastery, artisan craft wares, and Rimewood's famous fabrics. Wares from the Frostcaps and even the Crystal Expanse sometimes find their way here, too.

Rimecone Hotel. An entire tree near the center of the perch has been converted into the Rimecone Hotel. Designed by the famed sable luma architect Gari Merriweather [they/them], the hotel's round rooms are affixed to the branches with clay like buds. A nearby stream powers elevators that allow guests to access the hotel rooms. The Rimecone is the most luxurious and most expensive option for lodgings in Rimebaar. Guests can enjoy massages, spa treatments, and the finest foods the region has to offer.

Velden Guard Barracks. An encampment of the Protectorate's military force, the Velden Guard, lies on the edge of Rimebaar. The Velden Guard operates as the police force within the town. It is common to see Velden Guards in their horned helmets strolling through the streets. The barracks are run by Major Wello Steadyeye [she/her]. Wello is a plump tethera capran born in Rimebaar who truly loves the town. However, this love leads her to react overzealously against anything she sees as a threat to Rimebaar's peace and prosperity.

Tensions in Rimewood. Many residents in the rest of Rimewood resent Rimebaar's rapid rise. As young folk leave their perches to seek their fortune in the market town, those who remain in the old perches fear that their traditional ways of life will dwindle and fade away. Rimebaar residents can face hostility or a cold reception in the rest of the wood as inhabitants of the perches see the town as a first step toward the Stonehoof Protectorate controlling all of Rimewood more firmly.

Rimeheart, Traditional Perch

Rimeheart lies near the center of Rimewood. The largest perch in the forest, Rimewood is built into and around a large spruce tree and extends down onto the ground around the tree's roots. The perch has a quiet, sedate atmosphere, and the residents have a reputation for being exquisitely polite—if a bit stuffy.

The Rime Council. Before the Stonehoof Protectorate claimed the forest, Rimeheart stood as the capital of Rimewood. It still hosts the Rime Council, a governing body made up of representatives from each of Rimewood's perches. Today, the council still has power in Rimewood, but its decisions are always made under the supervision of the Protectorate. Many residents resent the Protectorate's reach. However, those who have grown wealthy thanks to the increase in trade have a more favorable view of it. One of these is the merchant and head of the Rime Council, Parn Herbinger [he/him]. Parn is a mistral raptor who is generous with his wealth, using it to buy goodwill and favor from those around him.

Dabid Hoffrichter

Nine Simpson

Rimeheart Market and Rootborn Antiques. Rimeheart Market was once the gem of Rimewood. Since traders began flocking to Rimebaar instead, it has faded into a shadow of its former glory. While visitors can still buy basic equipment and supplies here, the selection is limited. The one exception is Rootborn Antiques, a store run by the fieldscurry jerbeen Alwa Littlenose [she/her]. Alwa is the fifth generation of her family to run the store, and despite the shop's overwhelming jumble of books, artifacts, and knickknacks, she knows exactly where to find everything. Rootborn Antiques sells all manner of things, from old pins for a few gravs (cp) to extraordinary magic items at equally extraordinary prices.

Honeyhearth Monastery, Ranzang's Sanctuary

Following the forest trails into the deepest parts of the forest eventually leads travelers to a wide clearing filled with wildflowers. At its edge sits the Honeyhearth Monastery, a complex of domed buildings made from golden stone laid out in a honeycomb pattern. Although Honeyhearth is a peaceful place, it is not quiet. The air is filled with the buzz of sweetbees, the insects that the monks of the monastery believe are sacred to the Amaranthine Ranzang. Lively conversations echo in the halls of Honeyhearth, songs ring out over the flower fields, and communication of all kinds is celebrated.

Monastic Life. The residents of Honeyhearth are divided into acolytes, called Beewatchers, and monks, called Beekeepers. It is not uncommon for spiritual Veldfolk to spend a season or two as a Beewatcher in their youth, but very few take the full oaths required to become a Beekeeper. At any given time, there are around fifty Beewatchers and about ten Beekeepers at Honeyhearth. Daily life at the monastery consists of a regular pattern of chores, song, and communal meals. Deep conversation and connection are considered ways of honoring Ranzang.

Sweetbees. Red and black **sweetbees*** are a symbol of birth, creation, and cultivation. The sight of sweetbees is always a joyous one, for it indicates new life connecting to the past. Veldtfolk believe these insects travel from the land of the living to Tyton's domain of the dead to announce the joyful news of the birth of a new descendant to deceased members of the child's family. The Honeyhearth Monastery keeps hundreds of hives of sweetbees, caring for them and collecting their honey and wax. Most perches in Rimewood also maintain a handful of modest hives. On the steppe, most sweetbees are wild, but they still receive the same respect as their domesticated counterparts.

Pilgrimages. The monastery has simple accommodations for visitors. Most pilgrims come here to tell the sweetbees the news about the birth of a child. Others seek spiritual restoration by joining in the simple and regular routine of the monks. A short strig called Beekeeper Bubo [he/him] has taken on the duty of welcoming visitors to Honeyhearth. He is highly talkative and loves to show folks around the monastery and introduce them to his favorite hive of sweetbees.

Beekeep Bubo greets a small friend

Risa Hulett

Shrine of Ranzang. At the center of the monastery complex lies the Shrine of Ranzang. This conical building is illuminated by thousands of beeswax candles set into the sconces on the walls and candelabras across the floor. When a candle burns out, the monks believe someone somewhere in Everden has died. As they light fresh candles, they celebrate new life. The monks say spending time in the Shrine of Ranzang helps them cherish the connections they make with others before being separated by death.

Distant Counterparts. Honeyhearth has good relations with its sister monastery of Grimhearth, located in the Stormcrag region. A great deal of the money the monastery earns from selling honey, mead, and candles goes toward postage. Couriers of the Gargathback Package Company frequently carry letters from the monks of Honeyhearth to Grimhearth and back. Monks also make pilgrimages to see their fellow monks at least once a decade.

Other Perches in Rimewood

There are many scattered communities throughout Rimewood. These include:

Blueneedle. This lively perch is renowned for its embroidery. Blueneedle wares are traded across the continent, and as a result, this perch is particularly prosperous. The Stonehoof Protectorate has a large presence here as Velden Guards protect the caravans carrying goods south.

Conihold. The perch of Conihold is largely abandoned following a lightning strike that destroyed its central tree over a decade ago. Stories of the ghosts that haunt Conihold are used to scare young folk across Rimewood. In truth, a few die-hard residents still scratch out a living among the ruins, foraging for food on the forest floor.

Finely woven wares

Hazar's Bite. This remote perch lies on the very northern edge of Rimewood. Half of the perch is built among the trees, and the other half is built underground in the warren style. As it stands at the uncertain boundary between Firnveldt and the Frostcaps, the Velden Guard has no presence here, and Hazar's Bite is rumored to be home to many criminals fleeing capture. While this is true, just as many residents simply want to live their lives away from the Velden Guard's oversight.

Highslip. This small perch is built among the highest branches of a mighty fir tree. It is largely inhabited by birdfolk. Highslip's view over the forest allows them to watch for fires and other disasters, and the job of smokewatcher is a highly honored one. Young folk in Highslip train as runners to carry word of danger across Rimewood as fast as they can.

The Horned Ridge

Legends say that the Horned Ridge mountain range, which separates Firnveldt from Humblewood, was created by a single stomp of the Amaranthine Arghan's mighty hoof during his conflict with his brother Cairith. Only nominally under the control of the Stonehoof Protectorate, this mountain region is home to few folk, with a handful of settlements centered around religious sites.

As bare as they might seem from afar, the mountains teem with life. **Giant eagles** and **giant vultures** soar above the peaks. Thick-furred rockburrow jerbeen tend to small farms around the mountain temples, growing hearty root vegetables and shooing away mountain **meekrats*** looking for a nibble.

The Stonebell Temples

Veldfolk say that Mount Glockan is so tall that even the smallest jerbeen or sylph could reach up and touch the serene realms of the Amaranthine from its peak. Cut into the cliffs of Mount Glockan is an enchanting complex of vaulted temples and monasteries. Surrounding them are ancient stone pillars reaching to the heavens. Colorful fabrics and flags dedicated to the various Amaranthines are hoisted on wooden poles and flap furiously in the high winds. Wind chimes, clay bells, gongs, and other percussion instruments ring in persistent harmony from the cliffside temples. The temples and monasteries are constructed from the pale stone of Mount Glockan in a distinctive bell shape, underscoring the symphonic spirit of the region. These buildings dedicated to the study and worship of the Amaranthines are known collectively as the Stonebell Temples.

Arghan's Hoofprint. The grandest of these religious sites is dedicated to the Amaranthine Arghan the Unbroken. A ring of tall cairns lines the edge of a natural oval depression drained by narrow fissures and cracks. It is said that this rock formation was created when Arghan stomped his hoof to raise the Horned Ridge. Arghan's chief priest, a yantan capran Sern Goreheart [she/her], can be seen sweeping the empty hoofprint clean daily. During festivals, performers use the hoof print as a stage to recount stories of Arghan's might by orchestrating melodies wearing robes bedecked with ceramic bells that chime at the dancers' well-practiced movements.

Emory Kjelsberg

Riccardo Piovan

Skysworn Tenders. A branch of Tenders is headquartered among the Stonebell Temples. Almost all the Tenders working in Firnveldt belong to the Skysworn branch, and they return here after their assignments across the region to receive instruction and rest. The Skysworn Monastery contains an extensive archive, including some of the earliest histories of the region. The Skysworn Tenders are led by the Treekeeper Olver the Lofty [he/him], a studious brightfang mustel. Olver focuses on maintaining good relations with the Stonehoof Protectorate as he believes he can best achieve the Tenders' mission of maintaining natural harmony with the aid of the lord protector.

Other Temples. Most Amaranthines are honored here, though some, such as Gebbo and Henwin, only have a small shrine and a single priest. Others, such as Khlauz, have large, dedicated monasteries. Even Kren, the often distrusted Amaranthine of trickery, has a moderate-sized temple in her honor. Of the Amaranthine frequently worshiped in Wesden, only Cairith the Resolute and Hath the Whisperer are not represented in Stonebell. Cairith has no shrine out of recognition of his ancient quarrel with Arghan, and Hath is considered distressingly unpredictable and distant by the Stonebell clerics.

Stonebell Village. A small settlement has grown up around the temples. Stonebell Village directly supports the clerics, providing them with food and other necessities, though it is far from a wealthy place. The Pilgrims' Inn is a lodging where travelers can stay, paying whatever tribute they can afford. It is run by Cee Snowsprig of Stonebell [she/her], a white-furred rockburrow jerbeen who welcomes everyone with a smile and a slice of homemade seedcake. Cee is the closest that Stonebell Village has to a leader, and she is always willing to help pilgrims however she can.

RELIGION IN FIRNVELDT

As the patron of the caprans, Arghan the Unbroken enjoys widespread devotion across Firnveldt. Major temples to him have been established in cities, but more traditional stone cairns can still be found in wild places across the region. Travelers construct these small piles of rocks to mark their journeys and commemorate overcoming hardships.

The Stonehoof Protectorate is tolerant and open to the worship of all Amaranthines, but recently, worship of Eresutha has become popular among the Protectorate's elites as her mystery cult spreads along the trade routes. This shift was largely driven by the arrival of a charismatic tilia preacher from the Tanglewilds named Nenenon [he/him] several songs ago. He currently oversees the construction of a lavish temple to Eresutha in Caprabaar.

The Amaranthines honored in Humblewood are prominent in Rimewood thanks to the two forests' close cultural connections. The worship of Ranzang is also particularly widespread in the northern reaches of Firnveldt, though it has a more centralized form than that found in the nearby Frostcaps.

Harbarya's Cave, Site of Pilgrimage

The cave where Kartanya hid with his infant brother Harbarya after the massacre of their clan has become a site of pilgrimage. Though Harbarya isn't an Amaranthine, the first lord protector is honored almost as if he were by some devotees. Sometimes, he is considered an avatar of Arghan, while others believe that he was sent by the Amaranthine to unite Firnveldt.

Pilgrimages. The cave is largely unchanged from the rough natural formation that the Stonehoof brothers sought shelter in hundreds of songs ago. A relief depicting Kartanya carrying his brother is carved into the wall outside. The long and winding staircase cut into the mountainside allows access for pilgrims. Visitors leave offerings of gargar, fermented gargath milk, which is said to have been Harbarya's favorite drink. Though there are many reasons folk visit the cave, the most common is seeking a blessing for the safety of a family member or the determination to overcome a great tribulation.

Overseers. The site is kept clean and safe by a cleric of Arghan named Bold [he/him]. He is an elderly capran with white wool and long black horns. Bold is assisted by Jarvi Lessfeather [she/her], a corvum acolyte who is anxiously preparing to inherit the responsibility once Bold becomes unable to climb the stairs from the small temple at the foot of the mountain up to the cave.

The Underway, Expanding Trade Route

Crossing the Horned Ridge from Firnveldt to Humblewood is fraught with dangers. The terrain is hostile, and there are many predators, such as **dire mountain lions***, who will happily hunt travelers attempting to use the few narrow passes. However, the Stonehoof Protectorate is currently trying to remedy the situation. Started by Lord Protector Hurtle and continued by her successor Raf, the Underway project seeks to widen and connect the natural underground rivers that run through the mountains to form a canal, allowing more trade between Humblewood and Firnveldt.

Early Days. The excavations are ongoing, but a pilot channel has been opened up wide enough for small, flat-bottomed boats to pass through. The passage is still narrow, with low ceilings that require folk to lie in the bottom of their boats and push the ceiling with their feet to make progress toward Humblewood. Signal stations at either end of the Underway strictly regulate passage, with travel only being allowed in one direction each day to prevent collisions.

Orephidian Obstruction. The presence of cave-dwelling **orephidians*** has been slowing progress on the project. The Skysworn Tenders at the site demand that the excavations be carried out with as little disruption to these dark-adapted monsters as possible. And yet, pressure from the Protectorate to complete the project on time has led some unscrupulous engineers to consider explosive methods of widening the tunnels and driving off the orephidians simultaneously.

NPCS IN FIRNVELDT

Use the NPCs in the table to inspire adventures and encounters in this region.

d8	NPCs
1	Arnaut Pebblepeck [he/him], a tall, officious, and formal mistral raptor notary, struts about, seeking anyone who might be in need of his services.
2	Cyd Wildpaw [she/her] is an eccentric vulpin jewelry artist who has a secret business creating capran signet ring forgeries.
3	Daneeli Drianilee [she/her] is a tilia who recently arrived from the Tanglewilds. She has loved stories of gargaths since she was a child and wants to become a gargaherd.
4	A rockburrow jerbeen couple, Mehu [he/him] and Deston [he/him] Rainbristle of Caprabaar, is undertaking the long journey from Mandrabaar to Honeyhearth with their newborn daughter Imi [she/her] to share her birth announcement with the sweetbees.
5	Sollu Skysteep [they/them] is a young capran nervously looking for love at the Weavenstaampf festival. They wear a yellow desert flower in their lapel and anxiously smooth their beard whenever they speak to anyone.
6	Relia Burrowtuft [she/her] is an exhausted strig professor of arcane agriculture in Caprabaar on her way to meet a friend in Rimebaar for a much-needed vacation.
7	The tethera capran Obor Grassbeard [he/him] is a young Velden Guard. He comes from a family of nomads and joined the guard because he wanted a more stable life. However, his recent assignment tracking down trips that violate the Protectorate's grazing laws is making him doubt his choice.
8	Feer'yehng [he/him] is a sun eluran mage with a shaggy brown mane. He roams the steppe alone as a hermit-wizard, honing his arcane powers to a deadly edge. He is being hunted by Favo Ironhoof [she/her], a capran who desperately wants to become his apprentice.

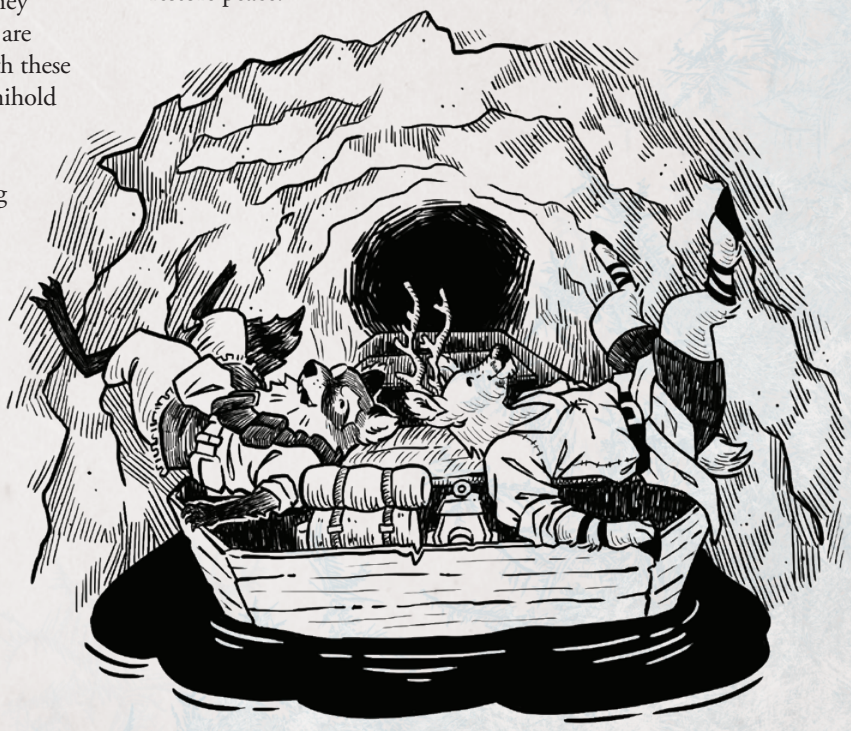
ADVENTURES IN FIRNVELDT

Use the following adventure hooks as inspiration for running games in Firnveldt.

Ghosts of Conihold (low level). Alwa Littlenose [she/her] of Rootborn Antiques asks the party to go to the ruined perch of Conihold on her behalf. She wants them to retrieve a precious artifact that she believes was buried for safekeeping in Conihold during the fire that destroyed the perch. When the party arrives, strange things begin to happen as they search. Their equipment is tampered with, and there are peculiar bobbing lights in the ashen darkness. In truth these are not ghosts, but several of the last residents of Conihold (**commoners** and **cult fanatics**) trying to scare the party away.

Herd But Not Seen (mid level). While traveling with a trip, the party wakes to find all the gargath calves have vanished in the night without a trace. The distressed adult **gargaths*** panic and begin stampeding around wildly. If the party can calm the gargaths down, they then face the challenge of uncovering what happened to the baby gargaths. Were they rustled by a rival trip, carried off by **grassbeaks***, or were they spirited away by an unseen force? The party will earn the trip's undying gratitude if they can reunite the calves with the herd.

Clashing Horns (high level). As the two rival Great Gatherings commence, tensions boil over between the Protectorate and the defiant trips due to increasing banditry. Lord Protector Raf begins marching his forces to Garganbaar to force it to submit to Stonehoof rule. Will the party race ahead to help Garganbaar prepare for a siege, or will they join the Protectorate's forces and fight against the trips' trained war gargaths? Or perhaps they can find another solution to restore peace?



Traveling the Underway

Nine Simpson

Stormcrag

Lightning cracks, illuminating the dark mountainside for a single dazzling moment. A wind, strong enough to blow travelers off the narrow alpine path, whips between the peaks, snatching at cloaks, whiskers, and feathers. Rain pelts down, obscuring vision and causing scree to shift and tumble. Up ahead, a warm glow emanates from an open door that leads you right into the mountainside. A friendly welcome away from the harsh elements awaits you inside.

Creation Myth. It is said that Stormcrag is a land created by spirits of all four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—dancing together in celebration. With their leaps and thunderous revelry, the elemental spirits shaped the spine of Wesden. Earth and fire entwined to form a string of volcanoes that erupt from the southern Tanglewilds all the way to the Frostcaps. Water's gentle caresses turned violent against earth's rocky cliffs, defining the boundary between land and sea. Air's cool breath, icy and harsh, chilled fire's heat and drove the terrestrial warmth deep beneath the ground. In concert, the spirits formed Stormcrag, a region of snow-capped mountain peaks, frigid winds, rocky seaside cliffs, and storm-wracked coasts. Today, while its elemental spirits have all but vanished, Stormcrag remains a place where the harshness of nature runs wild.

Though part of a larger chain of mountains that stretches up Wesden, Stormcrag comprises only the region between the northern tip of the Tanglewilds and the southern reaches of Firnveldt. Stormcrag is divided into four main regions:

Flashcrest. A spur of land jutting west into the ocean, Flashcrest is rocky and largely barren inland. Most days, lightning crackles across the peaks of its mountains. Conversely, the coastal region is home to many settlements that trade with the Tanglewilds and Firnveldt.

Hearthcrags. Southeast from Flashcrest looms the Hearthcrags, a range of mountains protected from the worst of Stormcrag's weather. The Hearthcrags are home to numerous high-altitude warrens and several small shoreside settlements. Well-worn switchbacks line the cliffside, linking the high warrens and the fishing villages that dot the coast.

Life clings to the cliffside

Nine Simpson

Scarpikes. Traveling south, the Hearthcrags give way to the towering Scarpikes. Buffeted by winds and storms from both the Spellsea to the west and the Songsea to the east, the Scarpikes endure the harshest conditions in Stormcrag and are thus the least inhabited. The tops of these mountains are capped with snow year-round.

Greenspine. In the south, the forest-shrouded Greenspine Mountain Range rises from the edge of the Tanglewilds. This region enjoys the warmest weather in Stormcrag, and its lower hills are always green with vegetation. Folk here share many cultural similarities and close ties with the Tanglewilds.

LIFE IN STORMCRAG

Stormcrag's rocky mountainsides and tumultuous weather make life hard. Settlements lie scattered and distant, with much of the region uninhabited. Still, the Stormfolk create joy and comfort in the extremes of their home thanks to a strong culture of community, compassion, and hospitality.

Warrens. Warrens, the main settlements in the high mountains, are villages built underground. Some warrens are constructed inside natural caves, while others are excavated. In contrast to the harsh landscape outside, warrens are well-lit and cozy. Generations of families share burrows connected to their neighbors by tunnels, and there are many communal and storage areas. Warrens are tight-knit communities with all the benefits and drawbacks of living so close together. Everyone feels entitled to know each other's business, and a Stormcrag proverb goes, "Secrets in warrens last no longer than a whisker's twitch." While warrens were originally founded by rockburrow jerbeen, they are now home to folk of all kinds.

Coasts. Though the rough peaks of Stormcrag are mostly barren save for the warrens, the region's coasts are alive with mysterious caves, fishing communities, and the region's only city, Cleave. The sea caves are also home to many **lightning orephidians***. These sightless reptiles are infused with the electric energy that is concentrated by the mountains' caves. The great serpents called wakewyrms are often spotted off the coast, but weather remains the greatest threat to ships. (For more information about wakewyrms, see the ***Humblewood Campaign Setting*** or ***Humblewood Tales***.)

Celia Tang

Economy. Stormcrag is less wealthy than its neighbors, with most folk making their living through foraging or fishing as well as a craft. However, the chilly, damp climate and intense elevation of the region provide a perfect environment for potent herbs, useful in cooking, for teas, and as components for potions and medicines. The rarity of these valuable herbs means many Stormfolk gather or grow rare herbs to trade as well as use for themselves. Stormcrag has a long tradition of training potion-makers in the delicate art of herbalism, crafting specialized and high-quality remedies sought across Wesden. It is also home to some of the finest fisherfolk in Everden. When the storms subside, the seas around the Hearthcrags and Flashcrest offer up rich catches of fish and shellfish.

Dangers and Defenses. The cracked landscape and frequent storms are not the only dangers in Stormcrag; monsters such as **dire mountain lions*** and **earth orephidians*** roam the mountains, while landslides and avalanches carry off travelers on the narrow stone paths. The growing season is short in the high mountains, and travelers must be prepared to face bitter cold, howling winds, and thin air or risk becoming another casualty of the peaks.

Warrens protect their people with a warning system. On a rotating schedule, the elders of a warren sit and keep watch near the doors. If the weather permits, they sit outside in the small entryway gardens, enjoying tea with one another while staying alert. When danger threatens, they signal folk to retreat to the warren with loud warbling calls amplified by the natural landscape or by flashing mirrors reflecting bright lanterns in the night.

Stormswept Tenders. Unlike other branches of the Tenders, the Tenders of the Stormswept Oath have no central base of operations. Instead, their members roam the region or settle within communities. These Tenders have a reputation for practicality over spirituality, willing to use unorthodox methods to achieve their goal of fostering harmony between the Stormfolk and the brutal landscape. Some branches disapprove of the Stormswepts' lack of organization, as they ignore the hierarchy used by other Tenders.

A stormswept tender channels the wind

POLITICS AND THE STORMPACT

The wide distance between settlements in Stormcrag forced communities to develop independently. As needs vary wildly between settlements, warrens and villages are self-governing. Most make decisions by community vote, though some larger settlements have established councils.

The Stormpact. Rather than an overarching authority, the disparate communities of Stormcrag are not bound to regional fealty but by shared interests. During times of great need or dire threat, Stormfolk unify under an alliance known as the Stormpact. The Stormpact has gathered fewer than a dozen times in recent memory, such as following the devastating storm called Reya's Wrath and when the Pirate Queen Bloodbeak burned the city of Cleave. Should the need ever arise, Stormcrag's people will surely unify to face the challenge together once again.

SETTLEMENTS & LANDMARKS IN STORMCRAG

Cleave, Stormcrag's Trading City

The bustling port of Cleave is Stormcrag's only true city, albeit a far smaller one than any other on the continent. With easy sea access and a deep natural harbor, Cleave is well-positioned to trade with both the Tanglewilds and Firnveldt. Stormfolk converge here to sell their harvests and catches. Thanks to the presence of many traders as well as a large population of folk settled here from elsewhere, children raised in Cleave often gain fluency in several languages before they are even old enough to attend school.

The Docks and Seacave Markets. Cleave's rocky shores have been converted into stone wharves, which are worked by a close-knit guild of dockworkers. Nearby, the sea-carved caverns have been converted into a busy market district, where goods from near and far are traded and sold at temporary market stalls and a pawful of permanent storefronts.

The docks are overseen by Ossumu Osasa [she/her], a fast-talking tilia who loves gossip. Her shrewder and more guarded sister Sasaoo Osasa [she/her] manages the markets. The sisters hold two of the three seats on Cleave's city council. The two sisters present a united front on most matters and focus on improving trade with other regions.

Thunderscroll Couriers. A common joke goes that the most powerful folk in Cleave are the Thunderscroll Couriers. The couriers not only move packages wherever they need to go across the region and beyond, but they also move many of the city's secrets from place to place. One word from a courier can bring early warnings of trouble, stirrings of alliances, or the imminent gathering of the Stormpact. The Thunderscrolls brave travel even during storms to bring urgent supplies to folk, no matter how remote a warren or village may be. The arrival of a courier is greeted with excitement in most places. The primary Thunderscroll office is located near the docks and is one of the most opulent buildings in the city, made from lumber imported all the way from Rimewood.

The leader of the Thunderscrolls is a sylph named Drastic Bloompeck [they/them]. They are the third member of the city council, though the Osasa sisters often thwart their suggestions. While Drastic cares about trade, they would like to see more of the city's wealth used to improve the lives of its citizens and strengthen the links between Cleave and other settlements in Stormcrag.

The Rock Shop. One of the most famous shops in Cleave is the Rock Shop, run by Marlowe Sageravyn [they/them], an elderly corvum who trades in beautiful rocks and stones from all over Wesden. The shop's walls are lined with a display of Marlowe's own extensive collection of stones from locations across the world, most of which are brought back as small souvenirs for Marlowe from thoughtful customers on their travels.

Smuggling. Any large city has unscrupulous folk trying to circumvent the rules, and Cleave is no exception. Most crime in Cleave involves smuggling; anyone with the right connections can get anything or anyone in or out of Cleave without attracting the attention of officials. Many locals are either directly involved in smuggling or have kin who are. In comparison, violent crime in Cleave is far less tolerated, and folk here have no love for pirates. Much of the smuggling runs out of the Duskholt sea caves a short way up the coast from Cleave.

Local Rivals. The city's prime trading location makes Cleave the object of envy from smaller communities who resent its wealth. Folk in Cleave can specialize and make a living as tailors, artisans, merchants, and entertainers far more easily than they could in any warren. Cleave's citizens are often oblivious to the resentment that residents from other settlements carry, which only further inflames attitudes that folk from Cleave have been made soft by the relative luxuries of their city.

Frostguard Warren, Cozy & Traditional

For those seeking a cozy place to overwinter, Frostguard, a warren high in the Hearthcrags, provides a perfect place. Atop the mountains, this community prides itself on traditions passed down from generation to generation. Founded over three hundred songs ago, the original warren only contained six family burrows, but over the years, it has grown to house over five dozen families. The warren has back entrances in several locations to different cave systems, allowing for emergency escape should the need ever arise.

Mountain Gardeners. Frostguard residents are known for their gardens, and it is rare to find a home not adorned by fragrant flowers and herbs during the short growing period. These are often dried and placed into the large storage areas along with the food gathered during the summer and fall to store for the winter.

Strong Traditions. Frostguard has a reputation as one of the most traditional warrens in Stormcrag. All meals are held communally in the great hall, where residents perform ancient songs in turn. Many possessions are held in common and children are raised by their "aunts" and "uncles" as much as by their parents. Perhaps because of the strong expectation of communal closeness, Frostguard has also produced many adventurers. Although folk who grow up feeling out of place in Frostguard venture forth to seek their own fortunes, they are always welcomed home warmly as the warren is deeply proud of its adventurous children.

FOOD & DRINK IN STORMCRAG

Food in Stormcrag falls into two categories: fresh meals made from plants that grow in the short growing season, and preserved meals made from things that store well over the cold, dry season.

Bloom Salad. An ever-popular dish, this fresh salad is made from edible mountain flowers. It is as delicious as it is colorful.

Luu Tubers. This starchy root vegetable keeps well in the cool storage rooms found across Stormcrag. When baked, it becomes soft and fluffy; if boiled, it takes on a gooey texture. The flavor is bland, so luu tubers are often heavily spiced or paired with more flavorful items.

Dried Spinefish. Fished from the Spellsea abundantly in Greenspine, these flat fish have lots of bones, but when salted and dried, they are worth the effort of picking them out.

Teas. Quite a few varieties of Stormcrag mountain herbs and flowers are prepared as teas. Many of them have medicinal benefits as well as being delicious. Some varieties include screerush (good for headaches), blue faux flower (promotes good sleep), and Ostelo's breath (soothes arthritis).

Grimhearth Monastery, Religious Necromancers

Grimhearth Monastery is home to the sibling sect of Honeyhearth. While Honeyhearth celebrates the beginning of life, Grimhearth vigilantly honors its natural end. The clerics here worship the Amaranthines Tyton and Ostelo and call on their ancestors for their wisdom. Grimhearth is built into the side of Mount Starreach in the warren style. Its winding tunnels run deep, with many passages left unlit. Silence and stillness fill Grimhearth, and idle chatter is considered uncouth within the monastery.

Grimbees. The black and red **grimbees*** are symbols of death, loss, and sacrifice. These burrowing bees don't build hives but live in small burrows within Grimhearth and in natural rock crevices across the region. In areas like Humblewood, where necromancy remains taboo, grimbees are considered monsters. However, Stormfolk maintain a deep connection with these misunderstood creatures. Stormcrag funerary practices ordinarily involve whispering messages for the dead to a grimbee. Grimbees also make grimhoney, a silvery sweet treat said to inspire dreams of departed loved ones.

The Shrine of Skulls. The collection of skulls in the shrine's central chamber holds great meaning for the monastery. In ceremonies conducted alongside the grimbees, clerics consult the knowledge of the past within the skulls to vividly inform the present. These skulls once belonged to esteemed Stormfolk, who agreed to have their remains interred here after death so their knowledge could be preserved for future generations. Folk from all walks of life, including craftsfolk, healers, adventurers, foragers, scholars, and herbalists, are all represented in the Shrine of Skulls. Access to the shrine is strictly controlled by the clerics, who always accompany visitors to ensure the skulls are not disturbed.

Necromancy in Stormcrag. Necromancy is utterly discouraged in most of Wesden, considered an affront to the natural order set by Tyton the Nightfather. In contrast, there are many necromancers in Stormcrag who follow the ancient tradition of death magic taught at Grimhearth. The most common form of necromancy is consulting deceased ancestors for their wisdom and advice. Stormcrag necromancers consider their practice one of reverence, honoring and affirming the connection between the living and the dead. Necromancers are also deeply concerned with lingering ghosts and seek to help them reach Tyton's realm of the dead. Some more advanced practitioners raise undead, such as skeletons, as they believe the vital spirits of the deceased no longer reside within their physical remains.

The greatest concentration of necromancers in the region is found in Grimhearth, but there are scattered practitioners throughout Stormcrag. It is not unusual for Stormfolk to consult a necromancer for aid, and they are keenly aware that their favorable views of necromancy differ from those of others. They are reluctant to discuss or disclose necromantic practices to outsiders for fear of being judged or persecuted.

Head Cleric. The leader of Grimhearth is a brightfang mustel named Rosemary the Solemn [she/her]. Her black-and-white-striped fur has grayed with age. Rosemary is both a cleric and a powerful necromancer, responsible for training others who seek to bridge the worlds of life and death through magic. She is distrustful of non-Stormfolk who have not yet proven their understanding of the monastery's relationship with necromancy, and she always seeks to protect her students from danger. She is always accompanied by Bloodstone, her grimbee familiar.

Sister Sects. The clerics of Grimhearth have a profound connection with Honeyhearth Monastery. Despite the many differences in their religious practices, the two monasteries enjoy mutual respect for each other's ways. Aside from the frequent letters they exchange, clerics also embark on pilgrimages to their sister monastery and host their counterparts every few years. Deep, lifelong friendships lie at the heart of this relationship.

RELIGION IN STORMCRAG

Though various religious practices are found across Stormcrag, one folk tradition is particularly popular.

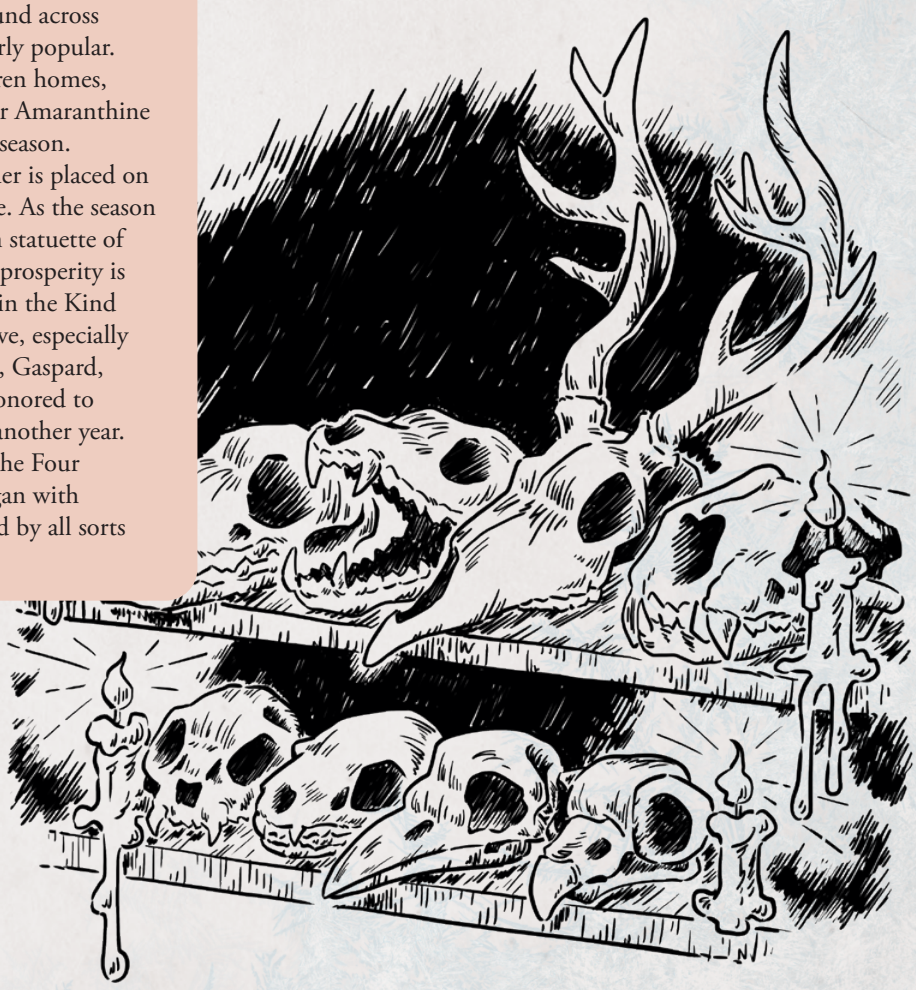
The Four Wise Friends. In many warren homes, folk keep a small shrine where one of four Amaranthine statuettes is displayed, depending on the season. In summer, a figure of Hanera the Provider is placed on the altar to celebrate the bounty of nature. As the season turns to fall, she is replaced with the twin statuette of Clhuran the Fickle as a reminder that all prosperity is temporary. In winter, a figurine of Henwin the Kind reminds Stormfolk to share what they have, especially when times are hardest. Finally, in spring, Gaspard, the patron Amaranthine of jerbeens, is honored to give thanks for the family's survival into another year. Together, these Amaranthines are called the Four Wise Friends. This religious tradition began with rockburrow jerbeens, but is now practiced by all sorts of folk in Stormcrag.

Haver's Cliff, Mysterious Village

This humble coastal community, named for the cliffside into which its homes are built, is a glowing beacon in the storm-thrashed darkness. The villagers here fish and forage seaweeds from the coast.

Strange Crystals. The lightning that strikes the Flashcrest peaks above the village magically filters down through the unassuming gray stone into caves close to Haver's Cliff. There, the lightning's power infuses crystals, making them glow. For as long as anyone can remember, the folk of Haver's Cliff have gathered the glowing crystals from the caves to illuminate their homes, giving the entire village a steady, violet glow in the evenings. Though the crystals might seem extraordinary to others, the villagers consider them entirely mundane. The crystals lose their light after a few months, so attempts to trade them have brought no wealth to Haver's Cliff.

Haver's Cliff's Sorcerer. One notable resident of the village is the elderly capran sorcerer, **Arlo Greenwool*** [he/him]. In his youth, he strayed far from Haver's Cliff on many adventures, but his deep, magical connection to the place of his birth always called him home. Today, adventurers and scholars alike seek him out for his wisdom and knowledge of Stormcrag's natural magic.



Skull Shrine

Nine Simpson

Windroost Warren, Fresh Ideas

Located in Greenspine, Windroost is one of the newest warrens in Stormcrag. Its tunnels are still being excavated under the watchful eye of Gabbro [they/them], an arma hedge engineer. Even so, in the 10 songs since its founding, Windroost has already become a vibrant community. It was formed after the population of the small nearby warren of Sohmleaf grew too large for the old tunnels to support. As a new warren, Windroost has attracted many unconventional folk who felt out of place in their home warrens, particularly those with big ideas about new ways of doing things.

Windwatcher Neighbors. A large population of **windwatchers*** dwells in Greenspine. These many-eyed reptilian creatures soar over the mountains using thermals and the elemental energy of air. Windwatchers are intelligent and social beings that live in flocks. The windwatchers near Windroost have befriended the warren and allow them to ride on their backs in exchange for food and ribbons to decorate their nests. This friendship was forged from the earliest days of Windroost thanks to the efforts of a gallus Tender named Mello of the Morning Dew [he/him] to ensure that construction did not disturb the windwatchers. Mello splits his time between the nest and the warren, working to maintain positive feelings on both sides.

Olong's Rest, Archive of Lives

The warren of Olong's Rest houses knowledge rather than folk. After one of the Stormfolk dies, their life story is carved into a clay tablet and taken to be stored in the great archive.

The Lantern Pilgrimage. The journey undertaken by the deceased's friends or family can be long and arduous, as Olong's Rest lies in a remote corner of the northeastern Hearthcrags. Stormfolk set out toward the end of summer when the storms are less vicious. Pilgrims carry lanterns and travel from their homes to Olong's Rest, visiting other warrens or villages along the way. At each settlement, they record the life story of anyone close to death or who has died. The pilgrimage ends with the pilgrim delivering the stories to Olong's Rest to be stored in the archives, and the pilgrims receive a token of blessing, thanking them for their service. Those unable to make the journey to Olong's Rest can pass the clay tablets on to someone else undertaking the pilgrimage.

Living Archive. A few archivists, led by rockburrow jerbeen Therm Gatherbrush of Olong's Rest [they/them], watch over the collection. Therm lost all of their fur as a child and wears knitted hats and scarves to stave off the chill in the archive caves. The archivists also double as miners who excavate more and more space each year for new tablets. Oolong's Rest records stretch back over 1,000 songs and are a treasure trove of information about everyday life in the past. Anyone can access the archive if they swear an oath before Ranzang not to damage its contents.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN STORMCRAG

Most warrens and villages have a festival to celebrate their founding. Other festivals often observed include:

Gaspard's Birthday. The traditional date for the Amaranthine Gaspard's birthday is the 1st of Rayswell, the first month of summer. In Stormcrag, it is celebrated with communal gatherings. These often include feats of strength and epic contests of the children's game hide-and-hunt.

Night's Long Feast. On the longest night of the year, folk gather together to enjoy a feast that lasts from sunset until dawn. Light from candles and oil lamps fills communal halls like a glowing island amidst the darkness. Revelers are kept awake by boisterous entertainments, including storytelling and singing. Warrens compete with menus of their finest stored foods to entice famous stonesingers to perform at their feast.

Oolu Oolay. On the first clear and still day in early spring, the mountains come alive with sound as Stormfolk practice the ancient tradition of Oolu Oolay. Folk call out "Oolu, oolu, oolu," in strong, warbling voices that echo off the mountainsides and across the great expanses of Stormcrag. Those who hear the call shout back, "Oolay!" This way, folk are reassured that their distant neighbors have survived through the winter and learn of any travelers on the roads who might need assistance. Warrens that are too far apart to hear even these long-carrying calls send out scouts to friendly settlements to exchange news instead.

Therm Gatherbrush

Nine Simpson

Sylph's Beak, Challenging Peak

The highest peak in the Scarpikes, Sylph's Beak is named for its resemblance to the long, slender beaks of the diminutive birdfolk. Sheer vertical faces ascend to a tiny plateau, often obscured by the clouds, evoking a spike more than a natural mountain. Only a handful of mountaineers have ever managed to summit the peak, while many more have been forced to turn back by the tumultuous conditions and thin air. Those who have managed to successfully reach the top have reported the air is uncommonly still, as if the vicious winds retract to allow the victorious climbers a moment of celebration and peace. Legends say that explorers reaching the summit may ask for a boon from the Amaranthines, and many folktales tell of such wishes being granted.

Knowhere, Hidden Fortress

The lost castle of Knowhere is a rumor to most, and its occupants work hard to maintain its mystique. Stories say it is guarded by ghosts and contains glittering treasures. The ghosts are said to have been warriors slain by the demon-wizard who ruled the region thousands of years ago. Most Stormfolk think Knowhere is nothing but a story told to thrill children, and travelers who claim to have caught sight of its shadowy spire in the Scarpikes are dismissed as having been overwrought by the difficulties of journeying.

Truth and Lies. In truth, Knowhere is the headquarters of an order of paladins who have sworn the Oath of Mysteries, vowing to keep Wesden safe from dangerous knowledge. The fortress was once an ancient Fizzar temple that was excavated deep into the mountainside. At any time, a dozen knights, squires, and scholars work within Knowhere, while far more knights scour Wesden for traces of Fizzar technology and other powerful arcane artifacts, bringing them back to the castle where they can be locked away under the order's ever-watchful eyes.

Leader of the Order. The red-feathered raptor Sir Bandarus the Obscure [he/him] leads the order in their quest to hide the knowledge that might be dangerous from the world. His long career has made him obstinate and cynical, believing that only he knows best how to keep Wesden safe.

Other Warrens in Stormcrag

There are warrens scattered all through the mountains of Stormcrag. Some are quite extensive, housing over a hundred residents, while others are far smaller. These are a few other notable warrens in the region:

Gaspard's Rest. This Hearthcrags warren claims that Gaspard, patron of the jerbeen, ended his days here after his adventures, before he was called to become an Amaranthine. Some families even claim to be his descendants.

Greenspine Gate. The warren of Greenspine Gate is where Stormcrag meets the Tanglewilds. Many folk here speak Eluran as their first language and practice many Tanglewilds customs as well as Stormcrag ones. Greenspine Gate is a river port as it lies close to the source of the Aosh River that runs out of the mountains and into the jungle. Colorful leaf barges carry goods and passengers up and down the river, pulled by **kappu*** at a leisurely pace.

Lonely Air. Located in the Scarpikes, Lonely Air is the highest and most isolated warren in Stormcrag. Its folk have a reputation for being eccentric and devoted to mysticism. They honor the secretive Amaranthine Hath the Whisperer and claim that being closer to the stars lets them hear her more clearly.

Nine Doors. This labyrinthine warren in the Hearthcrags is a tangle of overlapping and winding passages. It is named for its nine entrances. Its tunnels are a mix of excavations and natural passageways. Young residents delight in offering to show off their navigation skills by guiding outsiders around. There are rumors of a secret tenth door, and local children dare each other to go on expeditions into the deep natural tunnels to find it.

Isle of Irua, Elemental Island

The enchanted Isle of Irua lies off the coast of Greenspine. Legends say that long, long ago, the Isle of Irua came to be all thanks to a sympathetic mythical aquatic creature who chose to rescue a flotilla of small ships travelling across the Talesea. In the midst of a lengthy journey, a group of boats met a terrible and violent ocean storm for which they were not sufficiently equipped to weather. Irua, a creature with ties to elemental earth and water, spotted the troubled fleet and took it upon herself to save the travelers. She lodged the boats safely on her back and carried the terrified passengers to the calmer waters of the Spellsea. Exhausted by her efforts, Irua did not make it to the Greenspine shore and fell into a deep,

Chuck Grieb

unrelenting sleep. The relieved and grateful survivors remained on Irua's back and promised to watch over their giant resting savior. With time and under the protection of her inhabitants, Irua transformed into a great island. Today, the residents of the Isle of Irua are fiercely independent and only welcome visitors who are respectful of their customs.

Island Life. The isle is covered with thick vegetation and the few settlements are small and semi-permanent. Islanders, who consider themselves the descendants of the first inhabitants, move their homes frequently so they don't overburden any one particular area. The presence of some folk not often found in the rest of Wesden, including the otter-like webpaw mustels and aquatic salamander-like pexians, lends some credibility to the lore of the island's origin. The island is a very spiritual place, but the Amaranthines are not worshiped here. Instead, the elemental Irua is revered as both a deity and the land.

Undisturbed Nature. If the balance of nature is ever disturbed, legends say Irua will wake from her slumber and dive down into the ocean, committing the island community to a watery end. Scared of losing their home, folk here use less magic than elsewhere in Wesden. Druidic magic is considered an insult to Irua, and Tenders are deeply unwelcome. Although magic is not practiced here, that does not mean there is no magic. Fey creatures and signs of Irua's own elemental enchantments thrive on the isle, as does the surprisingly high concentration of elemental creatures.

ADVENTURES IN STORMCRAG

Use the following adventure hooks as inspiration for running games in Stormcrag.

A Matter of Life and Undeath (low level). A group of adventurers traveling on a mountain road from Humblewood have encountered a rockburrow jerbeen Grimhearth **priest** named Aster [she/her] and her animated mountain lion **skeleton**. Realizing she is a necromancer and assuming she is perpetrating an evil scheme, the adventurers take Aster captive. The spiny hedge **druid**, Wildrose [they/them], thinks they should kill Aster, while the vulpin **spy**, Mouchardo [he/him], wants to turn her in for a bounty somewhere. The party stumbles upon the scene of Aster pleading for her life and trying to explain she means no harm to anyone. Will the party intervene and help her or let the adventurers do what they will?

Bloodbeak's Revenge (mid level). A fleet of ships has been raiding along the coast under the command of a red-beaked corvum calling herself Bloodbeak [she/her] after the historic pirate queen. She has harnessed **lightning orephidians*** and is using them as weapons to carry out her raids. Bloodbeak's attacks are getting bolder, and she has begun taking hostages to extort even more from the coastal villages. The party is asked by Cleave's city council to hunt down Bloodbeak, rescue the prisoners, and put an end to her reign of terror.

Call of the Stormpact (high level). Politics have shifted in Cleave as a new populist leader has risen to power, ousting the old city council. Rockburrow jerbeen Governor Merro Grippaw of Cleave [he/him] plans to unify all of Stormcrag under his authority, crushing the independence of the warrens and villages through trade embargoes and force. A coalition of warrens asks the party to visit settlements across the region and call together the ancient Stormpact once more to unite against Grippaw. The party must find ways to convince the disparate and scared warrens that by coming together, they are strong enough to resist Cleave's overreach.

NPCS IN STORMCRAG

Use the NPCs in the table to inspire adventures and encounters in this region.

d8	NPCs
1	Cora Pearberry [she/her] is an excitable mistral raptor who has spent her life tracking great storms across Wesden. She is in Stormcrag looking for the "biggest storm ever." Cora talks extensively about her favorite past storms and teaches about different weather patterns.
2	Bellalori Bonnarillo [they/them] is an enthusiastic tilia climber who has traveled from the Tanglewilds to summit Sylph's Beak. They have already climbed four of Everden's highest peaks, and this mountain is their greatest challenge yet.
3	Gwynn Rivercane [he/him] is a young red-furred mapach Thunderscroll Courier who is bringing packages from Honeyhearth to Grimhearth. He composes tunes as he travels.
4	The famous arma hedge burrow architect Sardius of Emerald [he/him] is working on a new design for a warren. He is traveling with Fern [they/them], his luma sign language interpreter, scouting for the perfect site to excavate.
5	Freya Shadowgleam [she/her] is a vulpin tea house owner from Cleave. She is searching for gilded garland, a prized tisane herb that only grows in the rocky crags of Flashcrest.
6	The Sapphire Stonesingers Choir are traveling from warren to warren to perform their ancient art of stonesong. Their leader, an arm hedge named Adakite of Gneiss [he/him] believes that clues to the silence of stones may lie in the tunnels of a warren somewhere.
7	Trecker Quickpeck [he/him] is a traveling sylph who sells oils and potions made from the region's finest herbs.
8	The luma named Sir Semu [she/they] is a **knight of Knowhere*** in disguise as a traveling cobbler. They are tracking down a mage who is rumoured to be in the high peaks, enchanting lost travelers and turning them into thralls.

Amanda Brack

The Tanglewilds

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The jungle hums with life. Heavy humidity hangs in the air, soaking fur and feathers, and pearling on scales. Thick scents of vegetation mingle with the fragrance of vivid flowers and rich, dark soil.

A tropical jungle stretches across the southern reaches of the continent of Wesden. Nestled among the sea of trees is a vibrant society that has built its foundation within and alongside nature at its most lush. Inland, mist snakes down from the towering Oh'toh'oh Mountains like a living creature. Steps carved by tenacity and time curve around sloping hills, down into the hearts of lively cities and perches built among the trees. Along the southern Pearl Coast, the thick jungle gives way to fertile, flat farmlands nourished by the region's rich volcanic soil.

The Tanglewilds' jungle trees form a dense canopy. Below the canopy, the forest floor is choked with nearly impassable vegetation. Brilliantly colored flowers stand out against the thousands of shades of green.

Eluran Influence. The Luzos Regency, ruled by a family of sun elurans for over 3,000 years, has shaped the region's culture. The Tanglewilds is the only place in Wesden where Birdfolk is not the most common language, as most folk speak Eluran. Other aspects of eluran culture, such as the use of perfumes and written communication, remain prominent throughout the jungle. Tanglefolk value politeness and a strict set of manners among acquaintances and strangers, and they hold a reputation for being less immediately welcoming than other folk in Wesden.

Travel and Transport. The swiftest way to move across the Tanglewilds is by river. Boats made of woven reeds carry goods and travelers along the winding waterways. Flat-bottomed barges pulled by trained **kappu*** are the slowest but cheapest option, while slimmer leaf boats use magic to gain speed.

Where the rivers don't reach, there are a few roads kept clear by the Regency's forces. Untended paths quickly become covered by the jungle's rampant growth. Only adventurers venture off these roads and into the deep jungle.

Dangers. The jungle is home to many predators that eagerly hunt folk who wander away from the safety of the settlements. Travelers can be lured to their doom by the sweet scent of a **golden suneater*** or **feliad stalker*** and stumbling into a **tanglewasp*** nest can be deadly. Some daring packs of reptilian **tythrans*** even hunt in smaller villages and on the outskirts of cities.

The frequent rains that keep the jungle lush can pose difficulties for unprepared travelers. Though days in the Tanglewilds are sweltering, its nights can grow cool. Kindling a fire in a rainstorm is nearly impossible, and flash floods are also common during the rainy season.

POLITICS OF THE TANGLEWILDS

Legend holds that the Tanglewilds were created when the Amaranthine sisters Khaluz the Bold and Eresutha the Hidden had their first argument. Stories differ as to whether it was a petty quarrel, a bout of rough play, a philosophical debate, or a particularly violent game, but they all agree that the Amaranthines' tussle was divine and terrifying. It formed land out of the ocean floor which would become the Tanglewilds. Drops of Khaluz's hot blood gave rise to the Tanglefolk, while Eresutha's cool tears blossomed into the jungle's flora and fauna. After the two sisters settled, they became fascinated by the life they had created. Wanting to protect their creation, Khaluz appointed a steward of the jungle. Khaluz chose a sun eluran named Luzos as the first regent (or faa'seng in Eluran) of the jungle, establishing the Luzos Regency that still controls much of the region to this day.

Faa'seng, the Regent. As well as being the ruler of the Tanglewilds, the regent is also the head priestess of the Khaluz, the Amaranthine of the sun. The regent's regalia uses symbols of the sun to express the regent's power and divine connection. Historical doctrine teaches that the regent acts as ruler until the day Khaluz descends to rule herself, but in hushed voices, some folks ask: if the faa'seng is truly a regent, then whose regent is she?

The current regent is **Elisa*** [she/her]. She is a sun eluran with piercing golden eyes and black fur marked with subtle rosettes. Elisa became regent at a very young age after the death of her mother. Despite her youth, she outmaneuvered those who sought to exploit an inexperienced regent and proved herself a ruthlessly capable ruler. The Regency has enjoyed a time of prosperity in the 30 years she has sat on the throne. Although Regent Elisa values stability, she is not overly bound by tradition. She is keen to push the Regency forward and take advantage of innovations that could improve the lives of her people.

The duties of a Regency can be lonely but Elisa is kept company by her constant companion, her pet **radiant orephidian***. Elisa named the orephidian Rreem, the Eluran word for treasure, and she is utterly devoted to Elisa.

Troublesome tanglewasps give chase

Alannah Rose

Nine Simpson

The Sun Council. The Sun Council advises the regent. It is made up of high priests from across the Tanglewilds. Each major Amaranthine worshiped in the Tanglewilds is represented on the council, save for Khaluz, who is spoken for by the regent. Each council member is trusted with representing the wisdom of the Amaranthine they follow so that the regent can make a balanced decision. The Sun Council also has a duty to check the regent's power. This often leads to friction in the legal halls of the palace.

Uth'ehon, the Moon Priestess. Acting as a parallel branch to the Regency, Eresutha's worship is always led by the sister of the regent. The moon priestess (called uth'ehon in Eluran) has a less public role than the regent, leading nighttime worship in the secluded Moon Temple in Halara and practicing divination magic on behalf of the Luzos Regency. She also sits on the Sun Council as the representative of Eresutha. However, the moon priestess has long held a secret second role as the Regency's spymaster, directing a network of informants that spreads far beyond the Tanglewilds.

The current moon priestess is named Pia [she/her]. She is the younger sister of Regent Elisa and only ascended to her position 10 years ago upon the death of her aunt. She is a sun eluran with pale fur, dark gray spots, and the piercing golden eyes that mark the Luzos line. In contrast to her forthright sister, Pia is more reserved. She rarely speaks, but when she does, folk listen, as she is renowned for her wisdom. Publicly, she is seen as gentle and a little unworldly. In truth, Pia uses this perception to move unnoticed in the Regency court and across the Tanglewilds, taking care of the interests of the Regency from the shadows.

Mur Kengur, the Red Fangs. The Red Fangs (Mur Kengur in Eluran) are the daughters of the regent. These sisters grow up preparing and studying to become the regent or moon priestess. Until they do, they serve the Regency, often participating in the martial or arcane defense of the Tanglewilds. Upon the death of either the regent or the moon priestess, the Sun Council chooses one of the Red Fangs to assume the role, selecting the sister best suited for the position.

Since the foundation of the Luzos Regency, each faa'seng has always had exactly two daughters—that is, until the current generation. For the first time in the official history of the Luzos Regency, there are currently three Red Fangs, not two.

Cautious Ainoa [she/her], Elisa's oldest daughter, serves openly as an economic advisor and secretly as a poison and espionage specialist. Dutiful Reia [she/her], the middle daughter, embodies a devotion to her paladin principles, which makes her an excellent general. Khashmeen [she/her], the youngest, who at the age of 10 clarified for everyone that she is a girl, uses her abjuration spell casting talents in her role as personal bodyguard to her mother.

Some historians point to evidence that the desired number of female offspring has not always been natural. Adoptions and even murders have been used to maintain the Luzos' two-daughter heritage in centuries past. Nowadays, the regent's three daughters are considered a miracle and blessing from the sister Amaranthines Khaluz and Eresutha. Some traditionalists sneer at the idea of three Red Fangs, but by and large, the arrival of a third Fang is understood to be a sacred offer of help and wisdom. Working together, the trinity of the sun, the moon, and the spectrum between light and dark will lead the Tanglewilds into an era of prosperity or ensure the jungle's survival through a perilous time.

OPPOSITION TO THE REGENTS

Today, opposition to the regents falls into two main ideological camps. In the first camp are those who believe that a different leadership system is needed before Khaluz returns. The second camp is composed of those who think Khaluz is never coming and that the regents have long used folks' faith to enrich themselves.

Additionally, a nearly extinct faction called the Luhz'Meern is trying to summon Khaluz using esoteric rites in order to request that she begin her rulership immediately. The few remaining members of this cult make up for what they lack in numbers with the intensity of their fanaticism.

Pia, the Moon Princess

Risa Hulett

Mur Kengur, the Red Fangs

Rowan Holloway

HISTORY OF THE TANGLEWILDS

With records dating back around 3,000 years, the Luzos Regency is the oldest continuous civilization in Wesden. Officially, the position of Luzos regent has passed from mother to daughter in an unbroken chain from the first titleholder. However, given the regency's tendency to amend its own historical records, this may or may not be true.

Supported by more reliable records, the events surrounding the Bloodstained Law and the storm known as Reya's Wrath have shaped the region in more recent centuries.

Regent Meernglek's Bloodstained Law. Around 500 years ago, the power-hungry Regent Meernglek decided that the Regency needed to expand its territories to bring about "Mur'Keh Fohthlek." This Eluran phrase translates to the "Crimson Peace," but critics called it the "Bloodstained Law." In the name of bringing peace and order to distant territories of the Tanglewilds, Meernglek marched her armies across the jungle, demanding oaths of loyalty from every settlement not directly under Luzos rule.

Any protest against Meernglek's expansionism was met with violent retribution from the regent's forces. Most notably, in retaliation for the anti-Luzos sentiment in the city of Axxin, Red Fang Zawsur ordered the razing of the famed Grand Sunrise Library. Its three chief librarians were chained to the library's ruins at her mother's behest. This heinous act of brutality led to Meernglek's downfall. Horrified by their leader's actions, the high priests of the Sun Council voted to put an end to the regent's reign of terror and her life.

To this day, Regent Meernglek's assassination remains the only historically confirmed murder of a reigning regent. Whether she died under the united claws and talons of the Sun Council members or just those of her sister, the Moon Priestess Ahnyeu, remains unclear. Whatever the truth, Meernglek's level-headed daughter Tlawsur ascended to the throne. She swiftly disbanded the armies, ending the era of Luzos expansionism.

This dark chapter of Luzos history remains etched in the Tanglewild's collective memory. Rather than attempt to hide their past mistakes, Tlawsur decreed that the Regency must remember the darkness that lies within, enshrining the tragedies in public exhibitions, monuments, and days of commemoration. This guiding principle has been upheld among all subsequent regents. Regent Tlawsur's daughters established the tradition of the Great Apology, where every five years, the two Red Fangs undertake a pilgrimage to the major settlements of the Tanglewilds and make public apologies for the mistakes of the past. However, even today, rumors persist of certain political factions within the Regency who dream of reviving what they call the glory days of Meernglek.

Reya's Wrath, the Great Tempest. A little over a century ago, the most vicious storm in recorded history struck the Tanglewilds from the Songsea. In his famous epic, "The Song of the Great Tempest," the seeta poet Honey Beak dubbed it Reya's Wrath after the winged Amaranthine. The poem describes waves soaring as high as a bird's flight, winds with the teeth of the damned undead, and javelin-lightning seeking Halara's tender underbelly with unquenchable fury. While Honey Beak was exaggerating for poetic effect, the fact remains that the storm annihilated coastal settlements and destroyed great swathes of jungle. The people of the Tanglewilds came together to help each other during the catastrophe. Honey Beak later wrote, "Never in history had the people united thusly! As the petals of the dreamflower embrace each other at dusk, so too did the people!"

Not only did every prominent perch open its doors to refugees, but they each sent teams of adventurers, rescue workers, and physicians to scour the lands for the wounded. Every temple and university in Axxin—protected from the brunt of the storm by the mountains—dispatched clerics, druids, and wizards to help. The regent mobilized Halara's forces, charging them with rebuilding perches across the jungle. Among the Tanglefolk, the slogan "Together, we weather the storm!" took root, an idea that persists today as a cornerstone of culture in the Tanglewilds.

No one knows whether the storm was magical or natural. Divination magic revealed little. Halara has created emergency stockpiles around the Tanglewilds in case such an event occurs again.

HALARA, STAR OF THE TANGLEWILDS

In the northwest of the Tanglewilds sits Halara, the capital of the Luzos Regency and the largest city in southern Wesden, rivaled only by Alderheart in Humblewood. Treeshaped vines serve as roads throughout the city and treeshaped plants and branches form the buildings. Thousands of years ago, Halara began as a cluster of sun eluran families harvesting fish and vegetation from the mineral-rich Lake Halarr—a crater lake formed by the last eruption of the volcano Tangkehraw. While the volcano remained mostly dormant, the city did not, growing into the diverse metropolis it is today, granting it the nickname of the Star of the Tanglewilds.

Tangkehraw. Insisting the volcano's slopes are hazardous, the area surrounding Tangkehraw is off limits by decree of the regent. Tangkehraw occasionally rumbles and emits smoke but the actual reason for the directive is that the tilia Fizzar **Natu Tutulatu*** [she/her] and her lab inhabit the volcano. Few other than the regent and the Red Fangs know of the Fizzar's existence. Part of the reason Elisa concealed Natu's presence is Elisa coerced Natu into taking on a handful of Fizzar apprentices. Though Natu is obeying the reagent, Natu worries that Elisa will use her students and the Fizzar technology in unethical and harmful ways.

The Luzos Palace silks get rearranged

Nine Simpson

Atloh, the Evertree. The enormous Evertree named Atloh grows at the edge of Lake Halarr. It is one of the great, magical trees of Everden that connects the world with the Great Rhythm. Atloh's massive central trunk divides into dozens of huge branches, each supported by networks of aerial roots. These aerial roots and Atloh's thick vines extend far beyond the main tree and form the living vinestreets of the city.

Most buildings in Halara grow directly from the vinestreets. Each structure starts out as an orange and purple hanging fruit and once the fruit is ripe, the fruit is hollowed out and dried to form a building. New occupants and neighbors celebrate the completion of the building by feasting on the fruit's sweet flesh.

Buildings are entered through openings in the top of the fruit, requiring some folk to use ladders, ropes, slides, or lifts to access the entrance from the vinestreet above. In the distant past, residents knew the secret magic of shaping these fruits for their needs. However, this knowledge was lost for many generations following the Shattering. With the foundation of a new branch of the Tenders called the Wildgrowth Tenders, the magical practice of treeshaping has recently returned to Halara. New treeshaped buildings are now grown under the watchful eye of Treekeeper Grandmother Orchid [she/her], a venerable seeta, and her acolytes.

Luzos Palace. Though Atloh supports the city of Halara, the regent's palace is the only structure in the central part of the tree. Vast expanses of tanglemoth silk, known for its strength and shimmering beauty, are strung between the branches, forming taut floors and canopies. These woven silk protects the regent and her advisors from inclement weather and can be furled back to allow sunlight in.

As the palace walls, floors, and roofs can be rearranged by the restringing of its silks, it has no fixed layout. Day by day, the palace is reordered to serve whatever needs arise, be it as the grand temple of Khaluz, lodgings for visiting dignitaries, or venues for public consultations. Before dawn, dozens of attendants called silksetters glide and clamber through the branches to rearrange the palace for the day's activities. Only the throne room and the private quarters of the regent and her family go relatively unchanged.

Regent Elisa's throne was shaped from one of Atloh's branches over 2,000 years ago and takes the form of a wide couch that she lounges upon while looking down at her gathered visitors. The throne is the only treeshaped piece on Atloh's main branches, and it is considered a sacred sign of the regents' authority that the Evertree allowed its creation.

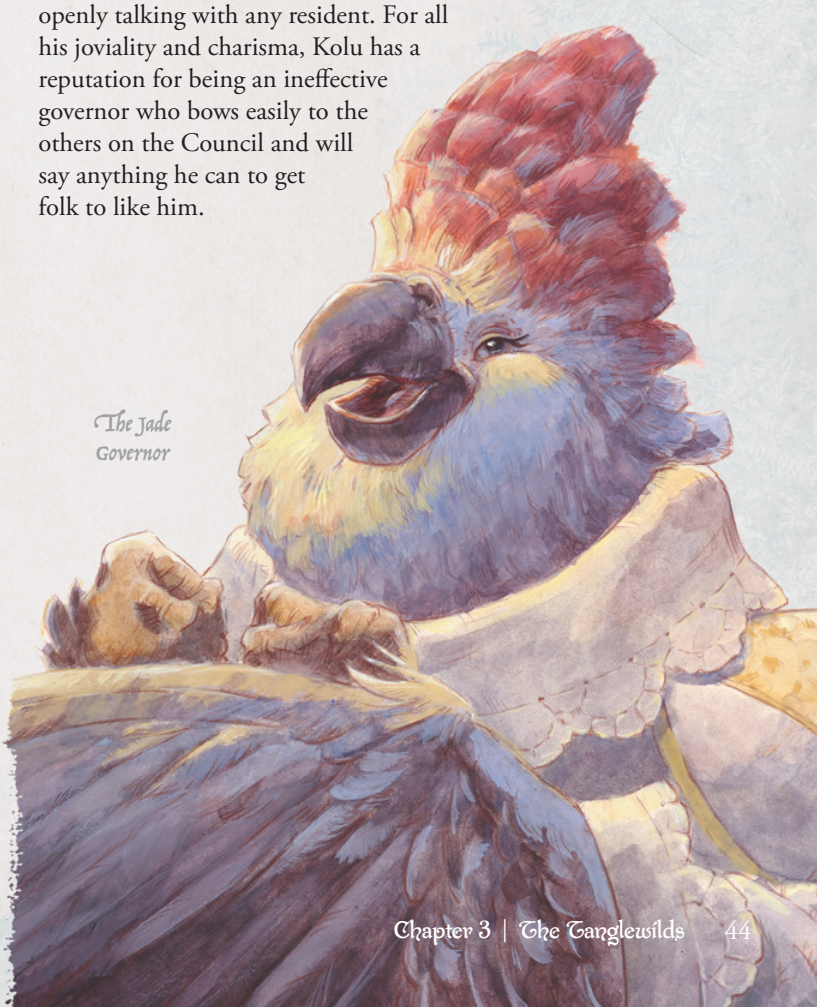
DISTRICTS OF HALARA

Halara is divided into three main districts, each with its own atmosphere and character. While the regent cares for the Tanglewilds as a whole, the day-to-day governance of the city is left to the Lake Governor, the Feathered Governor, and the Jade Governor, each in charge of one of these districts. The governors are appointed by the Sun Council every five years.

Jade District

The outer area of Halara forms the Jade District, and through its wide, crowded vinestreets and beautiful fruit houses flow the commercial and residential lifeblood of the city. Though daily business is still conducted in Eluran and Birdfolk, languages of all kinds can be heard here. The Jade District is home to the many descendants of those who relocated to Halara following Reya's Wrath. It contains Halara's largest residential area and is at the forefront of new efforts in treeshaping.

The Jade Governor. The administrator of the Jade District is a white and red-feathered seeta named OnKolu*soundofcoins*ZarrGai JuSa [he/him], better known as Governor Kolu. He makes himself visible around the district, openly talking with any resident. For all his joviality and charisma, Kolu has a reputation for being an ineffective governor who bows easily to the others on the Council and will say anything he can to get folk to like him.



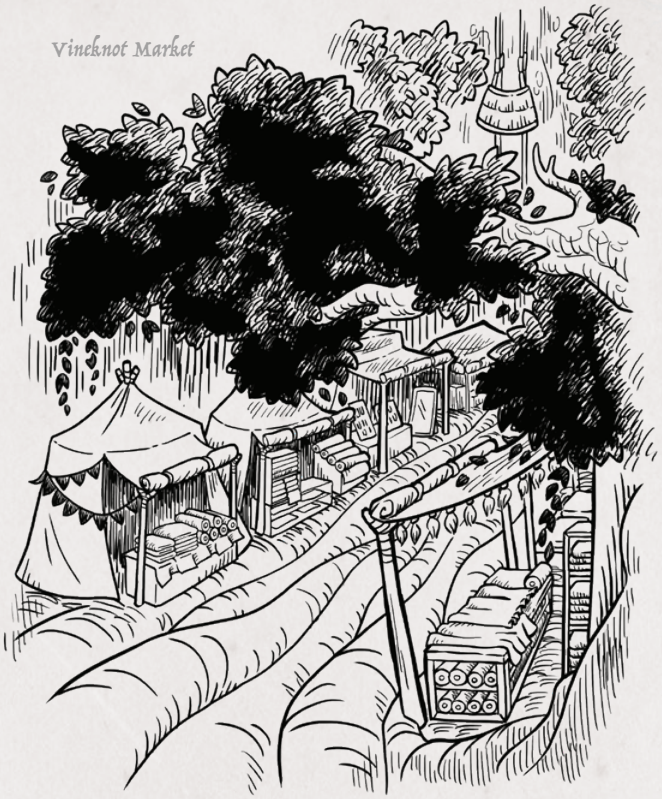
The Jade Governor

Chuck Grieb

The Essential Hearts. Of note in the Jade District is the heavy presence of the Thrai'jeelur or Essential Hearts, a unique, palace-funded corps of city workers who provide a hybrid of fire-fighting, law enforcement, emergency medicine, and social work services. Every Essential Heart is trained in all these aspects of emergency management.

The Essential Hearts are based in the Jade District but operate across the city. Governor Kolu is a strong supporter of the Essential Hearts, as he was a member before becoming governor. According to patriotic Halarans, their presence gives the city its unique character. They are recognizable by the blood-red heart wreathed in sun rays that they wear on their uniforms.

Memorial to Reya's Wrath. A series of empty wooden archways and doorways fixed in mid-air by powerful magic, this monument is considered one of the modern marvels of the Tanglewilds. Its architects, eluran siblings Theesha [she/they] and Khalaunga [she/her], cunningly designed it so that the wind plays out a song composed by famed seeta poet Honey Beak as it whistles through the openings. The siblings mysteriously vanished after the monument's construction, taking with them the secrets of their marvelous methods.



Vineknot Market

Nine Simpson

The Essential Hearts Guard

The Yoor'tlee Nursery. In Halara, the cultural practice of sharing plants with neighbors and friends has long existed. The aftermath of Reya's Wrath spurred official interest in the custom to help rebuild community spirit. Red Fang Reia personally funds the public Yoor'tlee Nursery, encouraging people to grow medicinal herbs and spices by providing free seeds and seedlings.

Vineknot Market. A large tree stands at the edge of the Jade District, forming one of the main outer supports for many of Atloh's vinestreets. Vines wind up the tree and branch into colourful, stable platforms. The folk of the Jade District have filled these with shops. Each level of the tree is dedicated to a different type of good, from foodstuffs near the ground to magic items at the top. Thanks to the importance of scent in the Eluran language, three levels are dedicated to perfumes and incense. Sturdy baskets woven from lake reeds and attached to pulleys carry visitors and merchants up and down the market. Although the market is at its most vibrant on sunny days, savvy shoppers know to visit during rainstorms, as many vendors offer special sales to attract customers willing to brave the poor weather.

Jade Docks. Goods and folk arriving and departing on the Tanglewilds' extensive river transport system do so from the docks in the Jade District. Located on a river connected to Lake Halarr, these docks are busy day and night.

Emory Kjelsberg

Lakeside

Lakeside encompasses the southwestern side of Lake Halarr, where fishing and heavy industry are prohibited. The wealthiest district in the city and closest to Atloh, the Evertree, Lakeside houses the homes of the elite, important government buildings, high-end establishments, and several local landmarks. Some buildings here are made from volcanic stone on the wide, flat lake shore rather than the hanging fruit of the vinestreets.

Politics dominate Lakeside, and not all of it favors the current regent. While Regent Elisa has maintained the dedication to peace that her foremothers have shown since the time of Meernglek's expansionism, there are those in Lakeside who would prefer a more active and ambitious regent. Whispers of the "glories of Meernglek" are shared at dinner parties among folk who see themselves benefitting from the Luzos Regency taking on a more militant attitude. Behind the opulent facades, secret meetings of the politically connected hold court, hoping to sway the opinions of the Sun Council, the Red Fangs, and Regent Elisa—not always for the greater good.

The Lake Governor. The governor of Lakeside is a slick tilia named Wab Babaalaw [she/her]. She only recently gained the title of governor, but she has already made waves in Halara. Wab is ambitious and eager to get closer to Regent Elisa. At the same time, she enjoys being courted by the district's power brokers. Savvy and sly, Wab is always willing to make a deal if it benefits her.

Luh'uz'urn, Temple of the Sun. The enormous public temple of worship to the sun Amaranthine Khaluz in the capital is considered secondary to the palace grand temple but is far larger. As with most temples to Khaluz, the Luh'uz'urn has no roof. It is formed of wide-open courtyards ringed by stone walls filled with windows that cast elaborate patterns of shadow and light at different times of the day. Built during Faa'seng Meernglek's reign to show off Halara's wealth and power, the Luh'uz'urn Temple was constructed on the foundations of older temples. Hidden catacombs and basements can still be accessed beneath the temple grounds, and can be traced back to a 1000-year-old long-forgotten cult. Though the regent predominantly performs her religious duties in the palace, she holds public services at the Luh'uz'urn temple four times a year at the solstices and equinoxes. These events pack the temple's expansive courtyards with worshippers.

Burnished Manors. A set of historic residences at the edge of the lake, the architecture of these manor houses is known for its distinctive brass decorative elements. These stone homes date back to before Atloh grew the vinestreets and are the oldest buildings in the city. Various wealthy families have lived in these houses for generations, and some are rumored to be haunted. The oldest, Khazluth House, is said to possess a mind of its own. Some say that the house is haunted by its first owner, a moon eluran wizard named Mormoch [he/him], whose ghost still controls his family's fortunes to this day. Others say that the house is a sentient construct built by Mormoch, capable of defending itself against intruders.

Upside-Down Courts. Though not a true Evertree like Atloh, the enormous fruit tree known as Aoltloh or "Atloh's sister" could almost be mistaken for one. Among its roots nestle the High Courts, which deal with thorny issues of governance and legislation across the entire Regency; in its branches sit the Low Courts, which serve Halara's civil and criminal legal system.

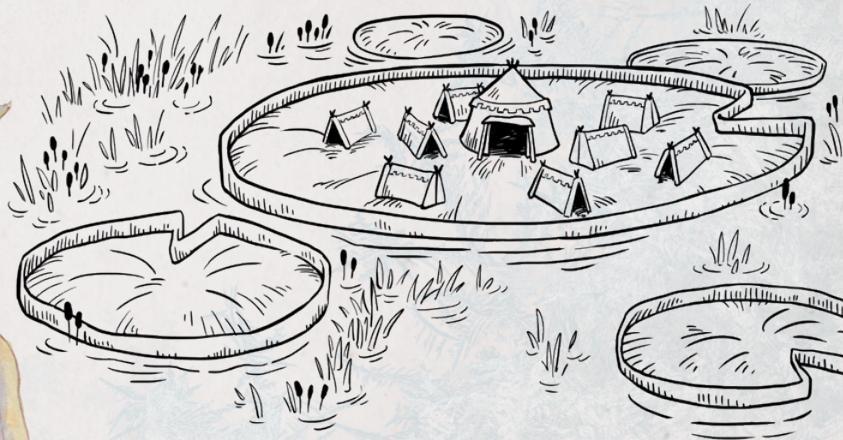
The Tenders' Pad. Many massive lily pads float on the surface of Lake Halarr. When the Tenders arrived in the city, they established their enclave on one of these gigantic leaves, constructing a floating base of operations. In line with their gentle attitude toward nature, the Tenders set up lightweight tents on the lily pad, which cause no damage to the plant. As they come and go on missions across the region, the arrangements of tents change, save for the central tent belonging to Treekeeper Grandmother Orchid. She spends much of her time in seclusion, communing with nature, save for the central tent belonging to Treekeeper Grandmother Orchid. She spends much of her time in seclusion, communing with nature, save for her visits to inspect new treeshaping efforts.

Nine Simpson

The Lake Governor

Chuck Grieb

The Tenders' Pad.



Feathered District

The western side of Lake Halar encompasses the Feathered District, where fishing and industrial activities occur. The district was established generations ago by the first birdfolk residents of Halara, but it is now home to folk of all kinds.

Feathered Governor. A diminutive moon eluran named Tao'hrehk [she/her] is the governor of the Feathered District. Although she maintains a spotless reputation in public dealings, rumors swirl about the aloof governor. Some say she is the lover of Pia, the moon priestess. Others believe she has connections with the city's underworld. Whatever the truth, everyone agrees that Tao'hrehk is extraordinarily lucky. Things always seem to fall in her favor. Tao'hrehk is deaf and is usually accompanied by her solemn sylph sign language interpreter, Ravel Glitterflit [she/her].

Feathered Docks. The docks along the western half of the lake are home to reed collecting, boat building, fishing, and other water-based industries. A somewhat out-of-fashion tradition holds that birthdays are spent walking along the docks and acknowledging the heart of the Halara. This side of the lake is quieter than the eastern side, but most of the leaf and reed boats made to traverse the Tanglewilds' rivers are made here, and renting them from the boat builders at the Feathered Docks is cheaper than at the more popular Jade Docks.

Alannah Rose

The Feathered Governor

Chuck Grieb

Fish Market. Though most commerce is conducted in the Jade District, the pungent smell of the Fish Market confines the fishing trade to the Feathered District, next to the docks. It's a lively, raucous place, popular among visitors. A mysterious pillar with a glowing blue egg-shaped top stands in the center of the clustered stalls. It emits a strong aura of cold across the whole market. The fishmongers don't know what it is or how it works, but they are grateful that it does, as it keeps their goods fresh for a long time.

THE OBSIDIAN DISTRICT

The so-called Obsidian District is not a true location; it is the name given to Halara's criminal underworld. While criminal activities span the city, most suspect that the most potent elements hide their operations among the warehouses and workshops of the Feathered District. Those in the know can spot the tell-tale slashes or "blazes" carved onto the walls of fruit buildings as messages between criminal elements.

NPCS IN HALARA

Use the NPCs in the table to inspire adventures and encounters in this region.

d10	NPCs
1	The blue-eyed sun eluran Thizz [she/her], the iridescent corvum Riz [she/her], and the gold-speckled cervan Lameela [they/them] have been romantically entangled for as long as anyone remembers. The trio runs a mobile food cart selling thirrila, a fermented seaweed wrap filled with spiced fish paste.
2	Sesha [she/her] is a pompous seeta poet-tattooist who orates her work out loud while working. She is working on a young mapach named Nono [he/him]. The fur on Nono's arm is shaved, and Sesha works with arcane pigments that will change the color of his fur when it grows back.
3	A spotted moon eluran filled with enthusiasm, Zhahama [they/them] is an Essential Heart who works closely with unhoused folks. They come from an immigrant family whose ancestral home in the south was destroyed by Reya's Wrath. They don't see eye-to-eye with the armed divisions of their organization.
4	The mysterious Seeza [she/her] is rumored to sell the most powerful magic items in Halara. This paranoid, masked gallus speaks to only those she trusts; even an introduction from someone she knows isn't usually enough to build that trust.
5	A wizened tilia who walks with a stoop, Aokhet Ketto [he/him] claims to have been cleaning houses in the Jade District since before Reya's Wrath, which would put his age at well over 100.
6	Ngangtlotek MaRa [he/they] is a middle-aged but robust seeta head of a family of luxury goods merchants. Ngangtlotek staunchly supports the historical Regent Meernglek's vision of imperial expansionism. They invite masked elites to secret political gatherings in their Lakeside manor, attempting to sway the Regency towards the "good old days of the Crimson Peace."
7	Outwardly a sun eluran with a good singing voice and a thriving boat-repair business, Shazh [he/him] is, in truth, a crime lord with interests in smuggling, racketeering, burglary, and assassination. His refined bearing and elaborately styled corn-yellow mane hide ruthless ambition and unending greed.
8	A longtime reed crafter, the green-feathered seeta Mother Leemkha [she/they] has been organizing dockworkers, including her many children, to advocate for better working conditions, earning her many powerful enemies among the wealthy families of Lakeside and elements of the criminal underworld.
9	Marshal Cadmon [he/him] is the first commander of the Luhz Kehsh—elite warriors who serve the regent—born outside the Tanglewilds. This tawny, regal strig comes from Stormcrag, and he reports directly to Red Fang Reia. While she trusts him completely, some at the palace question the wisdom of appointing an outsider to head such a powerful institution.
10	Known as the Bright Boys, the pale vulpin Zhaka [he/him] and coal-black luma Rrazim [he/him] are the most celebrated cosmetic artists in Halara. With their cart full of powders, pastes, and pomades, they grace only the most exclusive manor houses with their expertise. Zhaka has nursed romantic longings for his partner for years but worries that confessing his feelings would ruin their business relationship.

Anneliese Mak

SETTLEMENTS & LANDMARKS IN THE TANGLEWILDS

Thanks to the jungle's rich environment, there are many settlements throughout the Tanglewilds, particularly along the rivers that connect the region. Most of these are small perches built around trees, though some villages lay in clearings on the jungle floor.

Axxin, University City

Close to the southern reaches of Stormcrag, Axxin is a natural stopping point for travelers from the north. Second only to Halara in size, the city is the home of the most esteemed university in Wesden, flourishing museums, and towering libraries. The city rests in a wide, perfectly circular clearing, and its buildings are mostly made from wood and stone.

Politics of Axxin. Due to the atrocities inflicted on the city centuries ago by Regent Meernglek and Red Fang Zawsur, the Luzos Regency now considers the city a protected free city. Backed by generations of countersigned treaties, Axxin is a free state for all legal purposes, except that the Regency and Axxin are compelled to rise to each other's defense in times of crisis. Additionally, all Red Fangs must complete their education at one of the colleges of the University of Axxin, which the regent supports with a generous annual donation. The city is led by the Council of Proctors, notable arcanists and scholars from the university.

The Seven Sisters' Spires. Seven wide, silvery stone spires encircle the city, sporting neither window nor door. The spires are rumored to harbor tremendous and terrible magic within, though no one knows how to access it. Students have a long tradition of using the spires for pranks. For instance, one student transported a professor's entire office to the top of a spire, and another caused widespread panic by using illusions to alter the appearance of the spires.

The Grand Sunrise Library. Rebuilt after its infamous destruction by Red Fang Zawsur, the Grand Sunrise Library is the most extensive public library in all the Tanglewilds. Professional storytellers, street criers, and court bards earn their licenses here. Competition for a place in the bardic examination held once a year can be vicious. The public areas of the library are open to all. Still, access to the restricted sections requires authorization from the head librarian, a pompous and judgmental sylph named Vivace Hoverhold [she/her].

Pulp Street. A winding street populated by paper makers, ink sellers, and stationery vendors. Shop awnings are traditionally made of subtly colored patterned paper waterproofed with wax. For those in the know, rare spell scrolls can be traded here. Crossing Pulp Street is Chypre Street, where perfumes that express emotion in the written Eluran language are sold.

Nataly Zhuk

THE UNIVERSITY OF AXXIN

University of Axxin's colleges, buildings and libraries are found throughout the city rather than in a centralized campus. Each college is led by a proctor and focuses on a domain of study.

Some of the university's many colleges include:

The College of Astronomy. Led by Proctor Gil [he/him] a long-nosed mapach, this college focuses on studying the stars and divination. It also trains clerics of the Amaranthines Eresutha the Hidden and Hath the Whisperer. Under the current proctor's leadership, the college has gained a reputation for taking great care of its students as Gil struggled with the mental burden of his divination studies when he was a student and does not want the young scholars to suffer the same.

The College of Cogwork. The College of Cogwork is the newest institution to join the university. It specializes in gadgeteering, engineering, and architecture. Its proctor is an enthusiastic green feathered seeta, commonly called Clang, whose full name is JiMiol*soundofahammerhittingmetal*Wallaba PiLu [he/him]. The college lies on the city's outskirts as its workshops have been known to explode occasionally.

The College of Pigments. The smallest college in the university, this school specializes in painting and other visual arts. It recently gained great political power thanks to its jerbeen proctor Imrina [she/her], a blind weaver-sorceress who used her magic to root out corruption in the city's guard, and expose those covering up for their brethren in uniform.

Lah'Keht, Busy Port

The port town of Lah'Keht lies across the Spellsea from the Stormcrag city of Cleave. Most of the trade from other regions of Wesden passes through here. The town is energetic all day and night, with ships coming and going. Most markets and shops never close. Lanterns made from leaves and filled with glowing insects illuminate the streets.

Casual Vibe. In the rest of the Tanglewilds, Lah'Keht has a reputation as a boisterous and untraditional place. The delicate manners seen in Halara and other major settlements aren't found here—instead, money talks in Lah'Keht. The port folk are friendly to anyone passing through or wanting to stay as long as they have the coin. The town is also well known for its lively bars, taverns, and restaurants, which serve cuisine from all over Wesden. Many travelers are delighted to be able to enjoy a taste of home.

Sa'azeul, Romantic Destination

Sa'azeul is a mountain town popular among tourists thanks to the Sa'azeul Waterfalls that the town is built around. Mineral-rich water is heated to a boil deep within the mountains but emerges in basins at a temperature desired by bathers. As a result, numerous spas and bathhouses, carved out of the blue and cream rock face, have emerged in town, from tiny back-room pools to huge villas serving drinks and delicacies.

Town of Love. Sa'azeul has historically enjoyed a thriving queer population thanks to its status as the wedding venue of Red Fang Hatleefa [she/her], the first Red Fang to have married another woman some 600 years ago. The cheeky tavern song "Hatleefa's Flower" is said to have originated here. Sa'azeul is considered the most romantic destination in the Tanglewilds, thanks to this charming history and its waters. Many couples visit to celebrate their marriages.

Kehshkehsheer Academy, Military Training Ground

Kehshkehsheer is the sprawling training academy for the elite Luhz Kehsh warriors who serve the regent and her family directly. To support such a large population, a variety of shops, services, and amenities have grown around the main barracks under the watchful eye of Commander Ohmkhu [he/him], a grizzled vulpin whose amputated left leg has diminished neither his capacity for delivering a tongue-lashing nor his excellent aim. Red Fang Tlawsur [she/her] reorganized the academy into its current form after the fall of Meernglek as a way to ensure that the Luhz Kesh were as knowledgeable about philosophy and ethics as they are about bloodshed.

Secret Location. For security, the exact location of Kehshkehsheer is known only to a few, and depicting it on maps is forbidden by order of the Regency. Most folks know it is located somewhere deep in the jungle. Authorized folks typically need to be escorted, and the few unlucky folks who stumble by accident upon the Academy's squat, wooden barracks and officers' treetop quarters face days of questioning, scrutiny, and stern instructions about secrecy before being released.

Celia Tang

Training Body and Mind. Thanks to Red Fang Tlawsur's legacy, Kehshkehsheer boasts a surprisingly artistic scene. In addition to the ethics of war, the curriculum includes lessons on dance for balance and agility, singing for lung capacity and teamwork skills, and the jeermeerngkha—a traditional percussive instrument once used, according to the folklore, by the Amaranthine Khaluz to fend off a horde of demons. The academy's equinox concerts are some of the finest and—due to the academy's secrecy—least attended musical shows in all of the Tanglewilds.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN THE TANGLEWILDS

People have all sorts of reasons to celebrate in the Tanglewilds. Here are some common festivals, holidays, and events.

The Feast of Blood. This festival originated in Halara but is fashionable in the larger towns and cities. Traditionally, folks cook meals for those "not of their blood" to celebrate friendship and bonds "as strong as those of blood."

Eresutha's Carress. On the night of the vernal equinox every year, folk all over the Tanglewilds dream of the sky opening up and releasing something indistinct from beyond the stars. This has been occurring since the Shattering. Although no one knows the exact reason, the phenomenon is attributed to the Amaranthine Eresutha the Hidden. A quiet breakfast with friends is common the following morning as folk talk over their shared dream.

Merryrain Fete. Right before the height of the rainy season on the first day of the month of Kurkh'lah, folk hold great parties to honor the Amaranthine Gebbo the Reveler, hoping they won't bring disaster or floods. Pickles are traditionally exchanged.

Regency Day. The origins of this holiday, which celebrates the current Luzos regent, have been lost. Nevertheless, people celebrate with fruit juices and traditional costumes sewn with tiny mirrors to reflect the sun's light.

The Week of Lovers. Students in Axxin recently revived this ancient celebration. In the past, people in committed two-person relationships would try to court others for a week to test if their current relationship was bringing them both joy or whether it was time to move on amicably. Today, the festival's original philosophy has become somewhat diluted. The practice of consuming spicy drinks has remained.

Hathstar Lake

This lake formed from the impact of a meteorite. All of the vegetation in the area has grown to large proportions and taken on a silver sheen. Animals in and around the lake are also massive and have shimmering fur or scales. Once bottled, the water from the lake looks like liquid silver, which visitors are strongly advised not to drink. Ignoring this warning could lead to all manner of strange sorcery, such as shrinking to the size of a seed, floating into the night sky upon falling asleep, or disappearing entirely. A small island sits in the center of the lake, but no expeditions have ever returned from it.

A gray-feathered seeta by the name of DeeMelepha*soundsofthejungleatnightinhighsummer*StarSeeker HaYan [she/her] lives alone on the shores of the lake and maintains a shrine to the Amaranthine Hath. She believes the lake is sacred to Hath, patron of secrets and the unknown, and that the island is a gift from her starry realm.

Other Settlements in the Tanglewilds

The jungle supports many perches. Despite the oversight of the Luzos Regency, each settlement has a distinctive character. Some of these include:

Hlameetl. A dense collection of lightweight buildings sits on the two parallel bridges, the Blushing Bridge and the Bleeding Bridge, spanning the Mur'keh River. Originally the headquarters of an adventuring party founded by deaf tilia sisters Zheka, Thaika, and Zaorra, these buildings have multiplied and come to be known as the village of Hlameetl. Its Three Sisters' School is well known as a training center for physically disabled adventurers.

Hrai-Hrai. This southern perch is regarded with some suspicion by the Regency due to a cult centered in the town. Residents of Hrai-Hrai believe that in every generation, the Amaranthine Hanera is born as a living goddess among the perch's children. Priests identify a child who possesses the secret mark of Hanera, and the child then lives a life of luxury and ceremony in Hrai-Hrai's temple. The fact that the chosen child is never allowed to leave the temple until their death is kept hidden from outsiders.

Ngaofurr. A small mining town of reddish buildings, Ngaofurr used to derive its wealth from the prickly-pear cactus that grew there in abundance. Unfortunately, the destruction caused by Reya's Wrath wiped out almost all of Ngaofurr's crop a century back. In a twist of fate, the storm's violence uncovered jade and iron seams in the nearby rock, leading to an entirely new industry emerging in the town.

The Day Callers Enclave. A network of caves in the Feer'luz'urn Mountains is home to Luhz'Meern, a cult dedicated to ending the Regency by summoning the Amaranthine Khaluz to manifest in Everden. Poetic curses and insults targeting generations of regents crudely carved into the cave walls make no secret of the cult's feelings about the Regency. The cult's size has greatly diminished, with only a pawful of fanatical members staying loyal to the dream of the sun Amaranthine's eternal rule. They're led by a powerful gallus sorcerer named Harrat [she/her], who claims to hear Khaluz's voice.

FOOD & DRINK IN THE TANGLEWILDS

Thanks to the jungle's bounty and the long-standing culture surrounding food, the Tanglewilds produce both traditional and innovative cuisines.

Meerg. This common, earthy bread is found all over the Tanglewilds. For an added kick, fermented berries are baked directly into the bread.

Zimzim. Popular in Halara, zimzim is a dish of lakeweeds sauteed with fish. Every grandparent has their own recipe.

Tlatlacop. Tlatlacop is a luxuriously savory and fragrant bread made entirely from dried carnivorous flowers. It's costly and best topped with a dollop of honey and a sprinkling of toasted seeds.

Scholars' Hash. This mix of cheap vegetables is fried with spiced grains soaked in vinegar. Inns and university dining halls in Axxin invented the dish, much to the chagrin of all students.

Fizzar Ruins

As the Fizzar movement first emerged in the Tanglewilds, many remnants of the great temples to science and religion built by the ancient Fizzars remain throughout the jungle. Some of their locations are kept secret by the Luzos Regency out of fear that the mistakes of the past could be repeated, while others are unknown even to the Regency. Fizzar artifacts and facilities are also present within settlements, particularly Halara, though the fact that these once belonged to the Fizzars has been hidden from the public for generations.

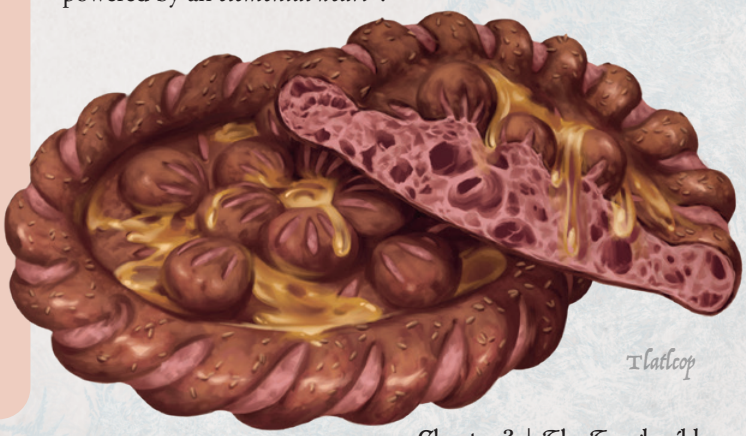
Carmine Hall of Rhythm and Reason. This Fizzar temple was built by a long-dead tilia researcher named Hillillia [she/her] in the center of Lake Oush. When it was active, the entire facility could be raised above or lowered beneath the water's surface to allow its aquatic creatures to be studied. Today, the upper three floors are stuck above the lake, and the lower two floors are entirely submerged. The lake is populated by fish and water snakes that grow metal skin carved with Eluran symbols on their bodies due to the lingering effects of Hillillia's experiments.

Temple of Braided Vines. The buildings of this temple have been completely overwhelmed by vegetation. It was once the laboratory of Pola Wran [he/him], a cervan Fizzar who wanted to bridge the gap between humanoids and plants. As the Fizzars began dismantling their work after the Shattering, Pola instead delved deeper into his research, becoming lost within it.

Sanctum of the Moon Glow. This hidden facility was unusual at the height of Fizzar power. Here, the most ambitious researchers sought to push the boundaries of their art further than any others. Hoping to keep their work a secret from rivals and those who might interfere, they dedicated the sanctum to Eresutha the Hidden, praying she would obscure their work from prying eyes.

Temple of Naba. This temple is located in the northeast of the Tanglewilds, not far from the border with Stormcrag. It is inhabited by the Heart of Dako, a lava elemental who willingly became a *elemental heart** so it could protect the region against the arcane storms caused by the Shattering. The Heart of Dako's protective and compassionate spirit lives on within the temple.

Tower of the Art of the Mind. A diamond-shaped tower made from obsidian stands lost in the western jungle. Gravity behaves strangely in and around the tower; sometimes, objects float in the air, and at other times, gravity flips sideways, turning walls into floors. Within the tower the research of a sylph Fizzar, Breeze Bloompeck [they/them], remains active, powered by an *elemental heart**.



Rowan Holloway

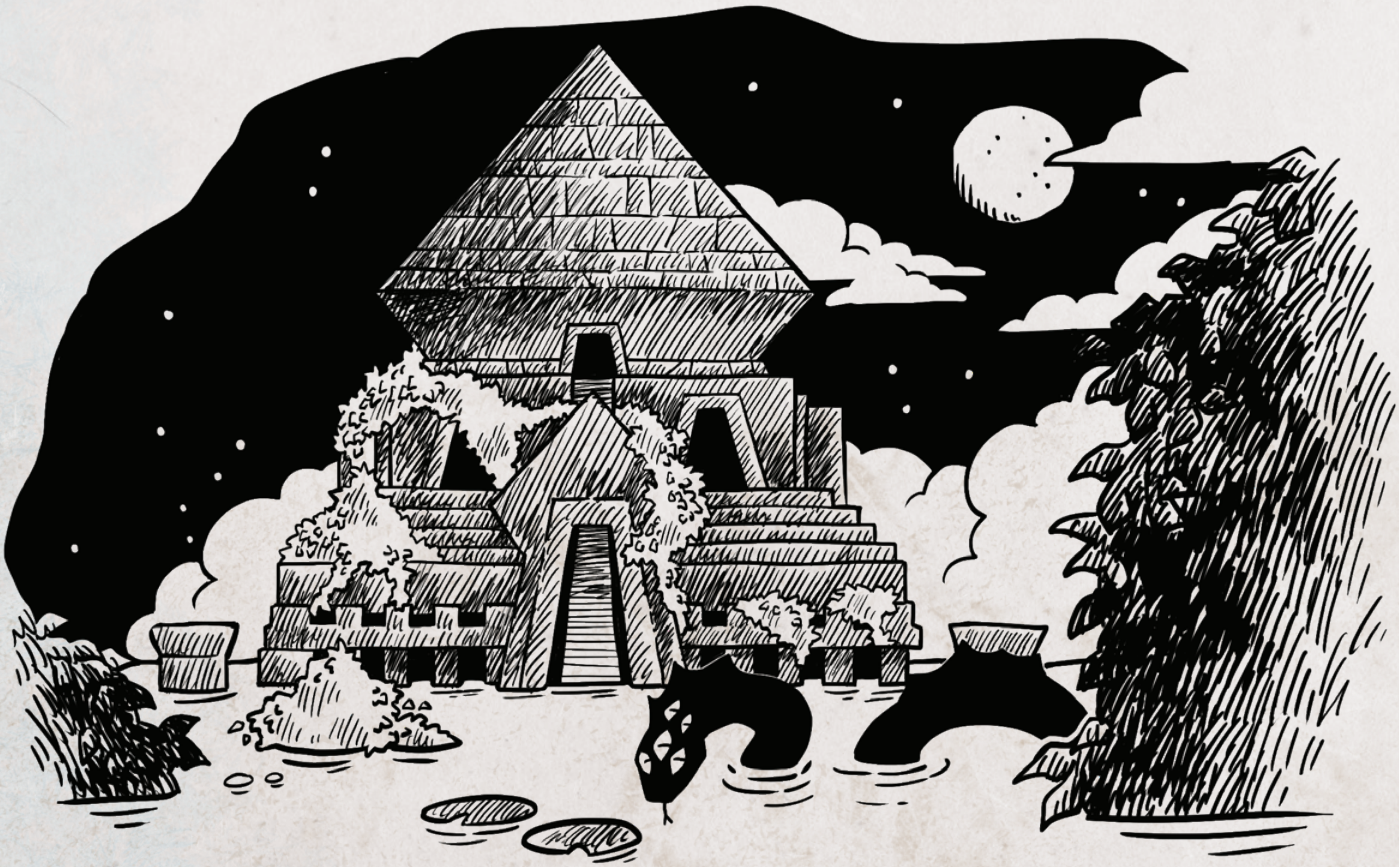
ADVENTURES IN THE TANGLEWILDS

Use the following adventure hooks as inspiration for running games in the Tanglewilds.

Catch the Kappu (low level). An accidental collision of barges on the river set two teams of **kappus*** loose. The panicked animals ran into the jungle, where they will quickly fall prey to **tythrans*** or **swarms of tanglewasps***. The bargefolk don't dare venture into the thick vegetation themselves. They ask the party to retrieve their terrified beasts.

Red Fangs Beared (mid level). Ainoa, the eldest of the Red Fangs, approaches the party with a secretive request. She suspects a plot to assassinate her youngest sister, Khashmeen, is building within her supporters. Ainoa can't act against them directly but neither does she want her sister harmed. She asks the party to uncover the plotters and keep Khashmeen safe without alerting her to Ainoa's interference, as she knows her sister's pride would lead her to take dangerous risks.

The Coming of Khaluz (high level). An unpredicted eclipse blots out the sun over the Tanglewilds, causing panic. A sun eluran in shining raiment steps forward and declares herself the Amaranthine Khaluz. When Regent Elisa refuses to step down, civil war looms as loyalties are split. In truth, the false Khaluz is a powerful illusionist named Murfesh [she/her] who wants to seize power for herself. She uses her magic to seemingly hold the sun hostage. The party must decide whether they will investigate and unmask Murfesh or side against the regent and face down her forces as significant change sweeps over the Tanglewilds.



Carmine Hall of Reason & Rhythm

Nine Simpson